

MARCH 11, 2004-TOWN HALL MEETING

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a Town Hall Meeting on Thursday, March 11, 2004, at 6:00 p.m. at the Darlington Community Center.

The following Board members were present: Larry Jones, Chair, Tim Pauls, Vice-Chair, Commissioner Lane Rees, and Commissioner Kenneth Pridgen. Mr. Ronnie Bell, Interim County Administrator, and Attorney Gary Vorbeck, Director of Legal Services, were also present.

Chairman Jones led with prayer and Commissioner Pridgen, host commissioner, called the meeting to order. Commissioner Pridgen introduced each commissioner and each department head that was present to answer questions. Each commissioner made an opening statement to welcome the public to the meeting.

Commissioner Pridgen presented a power point presentation to inform the public on county wide issues and ongoing projects.

One citizen questioned the status of the expansion of the school in Paxton. Mr. Bell spoke on the issue and explained that the commissioners have no jurisdiction over the schools.

At the Board's request, Mr. Russ Barry, Public Works Director, took the floor and explained the department's current and future projects.

One resident expressed concern with the roads being paved because of the reduction of areas available for horseback riding. The Board discussed that perhaps a provision should be made for this activity where possible, just as bike and walking paths are provided in coastal Walton County.

One gentleman questioned the requirements for fire fighters and paramedics. Mr. Bell addressed the man's question.

Discussion was also held regarding four-laning Highway 331 in which the Board encouraged the citizens to call and write letters to the state concerning the matter. The commissioners assured the public that the numbers and addresses would be provided on the Walton County website.

Several residents expressed the need for the water supply to be protected and improved to support future development. Chairman Jones spoke of the Community Development Block Grant the Board is supporting to upgrade the Paxton water system. Further discussion was held.

Additional issues that were discussed related to jail renovations, road construction, state regulations pertaining to contractors and installation of manufactured homes, and the spread of development to northern Walton County.

The citizens also discussed the future possibility of public sewer replacing the individual wells and septic tanks that now serve the residents in the area. One resident stated that she would prefer not having public sewer and water. She stated she was perfectly content with her private well.

The Board encouraged the citizens to contact them with their comments and recommendations.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
Larry D. Jones, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Martha Ingle, Clerk of Court

