

MBAR Aquifer Recharge Project Workshop

**Dixie County Courthouse
Board of County Commissioners Meeting Room
June 03, 2021 – 9:00 AM**

While adhering to the CDC Guidelines and following State of Florida Executive Orders: 20-51 Establishing Response Protocol, 20-52 declaring a Public Health Emergency, 20-69 regarding Local Government Public Meetings and the Dixie County Emergency Declaration 2020-27. The Board will meet and limit access by staff and the public to the meeting room. The Board meetings are audio recorded. The public can hear and participate in the meeting via conference call by dialing 1(917)900-1022 and enter code 32628.

COMMISSIONERS

Jody Stephenson
Mark Hatch
W. C. Mills, Vice Chairman
James Valentine
Jamie Storey, Chairman

STAFF

Duane Cannon, County Manager
Michael Osteen, County Attorney (not present)
Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk of Court
Jacki Johnson, Chief Financial Officer
Della Rhymes, Asst. Chief Deputy Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

The Board meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by Commissioner Storey.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

The Invocation was led by Commissioner Valentine and the Pledge to the American Flag was led by Commissioner Hatch.

JOHN LOCKLEAR, MBAR PROJECT

Mr. John Locklear appeared before the Board to give a presentation on the Multi Basin Aquifer Recharge (MBAR) project. He said this is a Springs Program administered through the state and DEP. He said this grant is for the improving of the springs flow, usage improvements,

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recharging the aquifer, quality, etc. He said the County can apply for this grant. He said the County has applied for others grants before. He said that recharge grants have been awarded to the County and the Water Management District administered the grants to the county. He said the funds come from the State then to the Water Management District and then to the County. He said they have met with DEP about 3 separate projects and they combined all the projects and have one budget to work with. He said they agreed to merge the 3 projects into the MBAR.

Commissioner Stephenson asked if this money can be used to fix some issues on Hwy 55A and some other issues with culverts.

Mr. Locklear replied that the County can use some; however, they must show the state the scope of the work and the construction must be permitted. He said the County would be reimbursed by the state and the County would have to provide an in-kind match.

Mr. Steve Hutchison said he thought the grants were for 80 percent of the project costs. Manager Cannon clarified that is for a different project. He stated that this one is for \$263,000.00 of in-kind. The County has completed some of the in-kind work and will try to budget for additional in-kind as the project continues.

Mr. Locklear reminded the Board that the River Grant was also awarded to them prior and they were able to do some projects with that money. He said the Springs Grant awarded different money to the County as well.

Commissioner Hatch asked if the Shady Oaks Ditch Project could be used as in kind.

Mr. Locklear said much of the water flow is still flowing how it should.

Mr. Locklear said the process requires a conceptual permit be allowed. He said they present a plan which states they think they can do this kind of work as a whole. Then they will apply for specific permits for the individual jobs. He said the Water Management District recommends that you present the big picture to the state then it helps to speed up the process and ensure understanding.

Mr. Michael Latson asked how you can get a permit to go on private property and do the work.

Mr. Locklear replied you must have the landowner's permission.

Mr. Locklear said that ponds can also be created if you can prove there is no impact to anyone downstream. He said you must follow the rules that are in place for these projects.

He said it is critical when the ground water is high it changes the flow pattern and direction of the surface water. He said the research models are created under wet conditions for the best effect and resolve. He said if the water table is high you can't recharge aquifer which makes this type of project a challenge. He said some areas around the county are like a bowl and some basins are connected and some are not.

Mr. Locklear said there are some potential project areas around the county. He said they would need county owned parcels for ponds to be built on or land next to areas of trouble to build a pond. He said you can put water onto wetlands, but you still need a permit. He reminded the Board of the Lower Suwannee Project which was permitted in 2002 to rehydrate the wetlands.

Manager Cannon said there was more work that was done on the Lord and Hodges and Barber culverts.

Commissioner Hatch discussed the work done near Jerome Johnson's place and the Bob Reed bridge that was put in.

Mr. Locklear told the Board they can submit some of the work done for this project.

Mr. Locklear spoke of the Airport Canal which is another area of concern for the county.

He said they can replace culverts or upsize them. He said the county owns property north of the Cross City Airport, but they can't do any work that may attract birds within 10 miles of the airport.

Manager Cannon clarified the guidelines for Federal Aviation is so many feet. He said he thinks it is 1,000 feet.

Commissioner Stephenson asked about using existing ponds to recharge the aquifer.

Mr. Locklear replied no, because it is not an improvement and most of them are on private property.

Commissioner Stephenson said that Mallory Swamp was done this way to hold and move the water through the area.

Mr. Locklear said they are doing the same at Cow Pond. He reminded the Board that the county will have to maintain whatever they build.

Commissioner Stephenson said that the water table fluctuates and will sometimes run like a Spring. He said the Board is looking for a happy medium for the public.

Mr. Locklear agreed that Mother Nature dictates a lot of stuff and that there is already a natural drainage process in many of the areas.

Manager Cannon said he will meet with the Suwannee River Water Management District and Mr. Locklear and bring information back to the Board. He said they must meet with their Board before anything is submitted.

Commissioner Hatch asked if another representative should accompany Manager Cannon.

Mr. Locklear replied not necessarily, but they can ask if a Board member is needed.

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Mr. Locklear explained to the Board that they will submit a permit application to the SRWM District as well as the State on what we are doing. He said the DEP must agree to reimburse the project.

Commissioner Hatch asked about the turnaround time on the money reimbursement.

Manager Cannon said 60 days total.

Mr. Locklear said they will give the SRWM District time to review before he sends an invoice.

Commissioner Stephenson informed Mr. Locklear that the pond at Rock Sink is not on his map.

Mr. Locklear said they are aware of this pond.

Commissioner Stephenson asked about construction funding for culverts for Old HWY 19.

Mr. Locklear said it must fit the project objectives and they should get an agreement before they do any work.

Commissioner Hatch said that on HWY 55 A the water flows every direction.

Mr. Locklear said the best model shows the ditch to the South would not help fix the issue. He recommended not building anything in that area because it may help and hinder at different times.

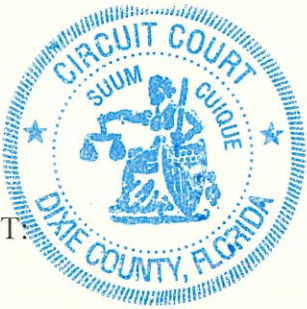
Mr. Locklear said he can meet with Commissioner Hatch for further discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

There were no comments or concerns expressed at this time.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Hatch made the motion to adjourn at 10:00 AM. Commissioner Stephenson seconded. Board approved.



ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA



Jamie Storey, Chairman



Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk-Auditor

PLEASE BE ADVISED that if a person decided to appeal any decision made by the Board with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearings, he/ she will need a record of the proceedings, and for such purpose, he/ she will need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

“Persons with disabilities requesting reasonable accommodations to participate in this proceeding should contact (352) 486-4931 (Voice & TDD) or via Florida Relay Service at (800) 955-8771.”

The Board meets the first Thursday of each month at 10:00 AM and the third Thursday of each month at 6:00 PM. Individuals that would like to be placed on the agenda should call Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk of Court, by 4:00 PM on the Friday Preceding the Board meeting, at (352) 498-1200.

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