



**BUILDING INDUSTRY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**  
**Community Development / Public Works Building**  
**1500 Monroe Street**  
**First Floor Conf. Room 1B**

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2021**  
**8:30 A.M.**

**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order/Review of Affidavit of Posting
2. Approval of Minutes – October 10, 2019
3. Revenue/Expense Reports
4. Fund Balance Report
5. Full Electronic Submittal Deadline
6. Fee Study – Discuss fee changes to take effect December 2021
7. Adjournment – Next Meeting Date: April 9, 2020

To view a copy of the agenda, go to [www.leegov.com/dcd/calendar](http://www.leegov.com/dcd/calendar).

For more information, contact Debbie Carpenter, (239) 533-8345 or [DCarpenter@leegov.com](mailto:DCarpenter@leegov.com).

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**MINUTES REPORT  
BUILDING INDUSTRY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (BIOC)  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2020**

**Committee Members Present**

Bobby Lyons  
Steve Wojcechowskyj  
Steve Gabor

**Committee Members Absent**

Matthew Johnson  
Bob Knight

**Lee County Government Representatives**

David Loveland, Director, DCD  
Shawn McNulty, Building Official  
Debbie Carpenter, DCD Administrative Services, Recorder  
Jennifer Harden, Permitting Chief

**Members of the Public**

Dan Beiter, Lee BIA  
Phillip Ford, Exec. Vice President, BIA  
Richard Durling, BIA

**Call to Order/Affidavit**

Mr. Steve Gabor called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. Debbie Carpenter, recording secretary, said the County Attorney's office advised that the Affidavit of Posting was sufficient as to form and content and the meeting could proceed.

**Approval of Minutes**

**Mr. Bobby Lyons made a motion to approve the February 13, 2020 minutes. Mr. Steve Wojcechowskyj seconded. The motion was called and carried unanimously.**

**Building Fund Presentation – Agenda Item #3**

Mr. Gabor recognized Mr. Glen Salyer, Assistant County Manager, who referred to prior conversations with the Committee about reducing the fund balance, and spoke briefly about the proposal that Mr. Loveland was going to make about spending down the reserves. He went over some aspects of the proposal which looked at the current fund balance and calculated an annual operating budget of \$10.2M. This fund balance is larger than what other funds typically carry but is a recognition of the volatility and lack of flexibility of this fund. The proposal makes a recommendation of a 25% across the board reduction of fees over the next year, and also provides for some capital expenditures which Mr. Loveland will explain, to spend down some of the excess reserves over and above the \$10.2M. He said Mr. Loveland would also be reviewing the permitting fee study which was a fairly dense and complex analysis of all the building fund related fees based on 100% full cost recovery, and would be asking for the Committee's help to review that information and help set realistic fees for the future.

Mr. Gabor asked for a clarification about how much the 25% reduction would reduce the fund balance. Mr. Loveland summarized, saying that using current projections, it was estimated that there will be an excess of approximately \$4.5M over the fund's proposed base level. Some planned capital expenditures would reduce that amount by about \$2M. A 25% across the board reduction for a year was expected to spend down the remainder. Mr. Lyons asked if that level would be

maintained going forward. Mr. Loveland said that during that timeframe staff and the Committee would be going through the fee study and working to come up with a reasonable fee schedule which would go into effect when the 25% reduction ended. Having fees closer to actual costs should keep the fund balance more level in the future.

Mr. Loveland had prepared a PowerPoint that first looked at planned expenditures. This included completion of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor reconfiguration, technology upgrades and high mileage vehicle replacements. The 1<sup>st</sup> floor reconfiguration included safety upgrades (some of which were planned before the pandemic and have become more extensive since), anticipated more electronic submittals and less walk-in traffic, and provided new cubicles for staff previously stationed at the counters. Some of this work had been done, but it was estimated that \$301,896 was needed to complete the work and the next slide provided the cost breakdown. Technology upgrades, estimated at just over \$1.5M, included an upgraded version of Accela and some peripheral programs as well as some hardware updates; a proposal to hire a script developer for a year to help with coding of workflows to work better with Accela; and replacement of permit fee-funded staff desktop computers with laptops and accessories to help the counter staff be more mobile and to accommodate working remotely if necessary. Mr. Salyer said he was looking into whether it would be possible to use some of the Coronavirus Relief Fund monies for that and also said that the County as a whole was replacing employees' desktop computers with laptops to be able to work from home if needed. The Java Script Developer (coder) would be under contract for one year. The Accela upgrade would fix some of the compatibility issues. Adding an impact fee module would automate the calculation of impact fees (currently being calculated through a spreadsheet). There was a discussion about the line item for ePermitHub. Staff has been investigating Accela's ePermitHub module versus an upgraded version of ProjectDox. ePermitHub has more capability, is better integrated with Accela and does what ProjectDox was initially intended to do. However, ProjectDox is in the process of improving their program and upgrading the current program would cost less. This is still being evaluated. The vehicle replacement line item would replace 8 high mileage inspector vehicles at a cost of approximately \$208,000. The grand total of planned expenditures was \$2,033,769. This would require Board authorization to shift the funds from the reserves to a new Major Maintenance project for all of these expenses.

Mr. Loveland reviewed the fund balance information saying that the FY18-19 fund balance was approximately \$13.6M; estimating revenues and expenses through September of this year was expected to add \$1,031,000, bringing the total Fund Balance to approximately \$14.6M. The capital expenditures would reduce that by \$2M. The 25% fee reduction would reduce the fund balance by another \$2.5M for a total reduction of \$4.5M. The proposed fee reduction would require Board approval for a temporary reduction of fees for a one year period, as well as authorization to utilize the fund balance to make up the difference in terms of operating budget. The Powerpoint slides provided additional details.

#### **Fee Study – Agenda Item #4**

The County hired the same consultant that did the fee study for the City of Fort Myers. The primary goal was to determine the actual cost of providing services. The Consultant looked at the different services, calculated direct staff time and overhead and compared this to the current fee schedule. The spreadsheet that Mr. Loveland distributed included current fees, fees based on 100% cost recovery and the percentage of change. A column showing the volume of 2019 permits was included for reference as well. It was clear that some fees needed to go up and some down, however what is reasonable and palatable must be considered. Mr. Loveland was not recommending any action on the fee study at this time, but his suggestion was to do an in-depth review of the fee study over the next several months in order to come up with a reasonable fee schedule to take to the Board. Increases require a 90 day grace period so the goal would be to take the fee schedule to the Board in about nine months' time which would put the new fees into effect at the same time as the one year reduction of fees ends.

Additional discussion followed. Mr. Loveland clarified that there is no delay for fee reductions; the 25% fee reduction would go into effect as soon as approved by the Board and the changes can be made in the system. He anticipated an effective date of December 1<sup>st</sup> 2020. Mr. Wojcechowskyj referred to the \$800,000 cost to migrate to ePermitHub stating that the cost was considerable and asked if increased efficiency and productivity was enough to warrant that cost. Mr. McNulty reviewed some of the benefits saying that intake was easier, verification processes were faster, inspectors have better access to plans, customers have easier access. If the decision is made to stay with ProjectDox that cost would be considerably less. Mr. Wojcechowskyj also asked about the computer line item and Mr. Loveland responded that the cost included not only computers, docking stations and monitors but also a number of "rugged" computers. Mr. Beiter, BIA, asked if the county was using iPads and Mr. McNulty said no. There are some limitations with those, the laptops offer a better range of what can be done in the field.

Mr. Lyons asked if the BIA had been involved in the conversations with respect to these recommendations. Mr. Phillip Ford of the BIA replied that the BIA has been involved and said that these things did what the industry had been asking for which was to reduce the fund balance, reduce fees and to provide a detailed analysis of what the County wanted to spend money on. Mr. Richard Durling, also of BIA, said the primary goal was to reduce the fund balance, he was happy to see a reduction of fees overall, and replacement of the vehicles goes directly to the implementation of the building code. Mr. Loveland said there was a discussion about possibly using some of the funds for Builders Care, but there was some question whether that would meet the statutory definition of what the funds could be used for.

Mr. Loveland anticipated that with the Board's approval of the expenditures, construction plans can be completed and everything will be in place to open the permit lobby around the first of the year. In the meantime, the building's lobby is open for paper drop-offs but electronic submittals are still being encouraged. Notice has been given that in the near future only electronic submittals will be accepted for fire permits and pools.

Mr. Lyons said that the industry appreciated all the County had done and made a motion to accept the recommendations made. Mr. Gabor seconded the motion and clarified that the motion would be to implement the 25% across the board reduction of fees as soon as possible, and also to approve the \$2M for the planned expenditures for 1<sup>st</sup> floor reconfiguration, technology upgrades and vehicle replacement. Mr. Lyons agreed with the clarification and the motion was called. It was approved unanimously.

Mr. Beiter asked how long the fee study process took from start to finish. Mr. Loveland estimated about six months or so. Mr. Wojcechowskyj again asked about the efficiencies and if they could be measured (how much needs to be done and how many people does it take to do it) since staff is a large part of the budget. If the technology is not getting more work done without growing staff then why spend the money. Mr. Loveland said the focus is on good customer service. Staffing needs are evaluated and adjusted regularly and turnovers allow for less people through attrition.

#### **Adjournment**

There was no further discussion and no new business. Mr. Gabor adjourned the meeting at 9:20 a.m.

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for December 10, 2020.