

County agrees to terminate sheriff patrol contract

Written by Deb Egenberger
Friday, 05 February 2010 14:51 -

Guaranteed hours in village will end March 31.

Lincoln County sheriff's cruisers will no longer have a guaranteed presence in Brady.

County commissioners were hesitant Monday but agreed to end the village of Brady's contract with the sheriff's department.

"We know they've done good things for us," said village clerk Pam Diehl, "but we've got this giant thing hanging over us and we have to save some money somewhere."

That "giant thing" is a state-mandated upgrade to the village's waste water system, including the sewage lagoons.

"We have no idea at this point how much all that is going to cost," Diehl said. "Even if we get some grants to help pay for it, the village is going to have to put some money into the project that simply isn't in the budget."

Brady's most recent contract with the county for law enforcement services was nearly \$14,000 a year for 60 hours of patrol per month.

At the January board meeting, village trustees agreed the contract was likely not the best use of the village's money right now and requested the county terminate the agreement.

Diehl said county commissioners told her and trustee Joe May during Monday's meeting that state statute requires the village have some sort of law enforcement service.

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That's not what village attorney Steve Vinton shared with trustees last month, though.

Vinton said the sheriff's department will continue to be responsible for enforcing state laws in the village and will be required to answer all 911 calls for service.

Sheriff's deputies will not, however, enforce village ordinances such as local laws pertaining to loose dogs or junk cars.

His office will handle those duties instead.

That's how it works in Maxwell, which terminated its own village agreement with the Lincoln County sheriff's department on Jan. 19.

Maxwell village clerk Nanette King said Maxwell ended its agreement with the county for similar reasons, to save money.

She said there is a state statute addressing village law enforcement but the wording is vague and Maxwell trustees chose to use Vinton, also Maxwell's attorney, to enforce local ordinances.

Because the village of Brady has already paid half its contracted amount for law enforcement, the guaranteed patrol hours will run through March 31.

In the meantime, Diehl said the village continues to look for ways to help pay to fix the waste water issues.

The village was awarded just over \$23,000 in community development block grant funds to help pay for the study required on the sewage lagoons.

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“That doesn’t touch fixing the problems,” Diehl said.