

Village asking to reinstate sheriff patrol contract

Written by Deb Egenberger
Friday, 05 March 2010 14:56 -

Public asks board to reconsider earlier decision.

Not a single Brady resident spoke during the January village board meeting when trustees voted to terminate a contract with the Lincoln County sheriff's department for guaranteed law enforcement patrol hours.

Since then, members of the public have made their voices heard and the board responded.

During a special meeting on Feb. 24, trustees listened to public comment before voting to rescind their previous action and ask the county to reinstate the law enforcement contract.

On Feb. 1, Lincoln County commissioners granted the village's request to end the sheriff's patrol contract.

Since the village had paid for the service through March 31, patrol was to end on April 1.

But residents say they don't want to lose the presence of a deputy in town, no matter what time of day or night the cruiser appears.

"You cannot put a price tag on law enforcement," resident Ken Diehl told trustees, explaining that deterrence is one service deputies offer that often goes unnoticed. "You never know what might be prevented."

The decision to end the contract was made in January, board members said, with the understanding that the village will need to save every penny possible to pay for state-mandated sewage lagoon repairs with a price tag as high as \$500,000.

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The law enforcement contract costs Brady roughly \$14,000 per year.

Dennis Christophersen, a former village board member, said he doesn't see how the village will save any money.

"If you get rid of the sheriff's contract, there's no one other than the village to enforce ordinances," Christophersen said. "Either they won't get enforced and it will be a nightmare or you'll pay the attorney to do it and you won't see a bit of savings."

Justin Mann, who was later selected to fill a vacancy on the village board, said he looks at the issue from a different perspective. He said the village must consider every option for saving enough money to pay for the lagoon repairs.

"If we have to save the money and this is the only alternative, then the village needs to end the contract," Mann said.

Village vice chairman Troy Viter, who presided over the special meeting, admitted the board may have "jumped the gun" by asking the county to end the law enforcement contract.

The board was under the impression, he said, that lagoon repairs would have to be paid for yet this year when in fact it may be as many as four years down the road.

"Then why can't you raise the sewer fees a couple bucks a month and save that money before you need it?" asked resident George Finnell.

Viter said that's a viable option.

County commissioner Duane Deterding told trustees they could ask the county to reinstate the

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previous contract, which runs though 2012.

The village will ask to be on the next available county board agenda.

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