



BALDWIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS PUBLIC HEARING

**September 15, 2023
1601 N Columbia St, Suite 220
11:00 AM**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Emily Davis
John Westmoreland
Kendrick Butts
Henry Craig
Sammy Hall

ALSO PRESENT

Carlos Tobar
Dawn Hudson
Brandon Palmer
Cindy Cunningham

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Emily Davis called the Public Hearing to order at 11:00 a.m. She stated the purpose of the Public Hearing is present proposed amendments to the Baldwin County Code of Ordinances and to obtain public input on the proposed amendments.

County Manager Carlos Tobar opened discussion on sections of the Code as follows:

Chapter 34: Offenses and Miscellaneous Provisions-Section 34-76, 34-77.

Mr. Tobar stated this chapter deals with Urban Camping making it unlawful for any person to set up tents, shacks, or any other temporary shelter on County or State property for the purpose of overnight or daytime camping without expressed written permission. It shall be unlawful for any person to leave any movable or temporary structure that could be used for overnight or daylight camping on County property outside the County property's hours of operation.

Mr. Tobar reported no one from the public has signed up to comment on item.

Chapter 14: Unified Animal Control Ordinance-Section 14-37.

County Manager Tobar reported this section states it shall be unlawful to willfully and knowingly make a false, fictitious or fraudulent statement or representation to an animal control officer or other County employee regarding an animal.

Tina Behne, 160 Pine Drive NE, addressed the Board concerning the wording of this section and how a statement would be determined to be a false, fictitious or fraudulent statement.

Chapter 58: Utilities-Section 58-33.

Mr. Tobar stated this section deals with special metering requirements, i.e. master meters.

County Attorney Brandon Palmer read Section 58-33 (a)(2) stating that water service shall be furnished to mobile home parks through meters to each residential unit; provided however that mobile home parks in existence as of (date adopted) and which then did furnish water service through master meters may continue to do so according to the County's standards and specifications. All water service furnished to mobile home parks shall be charged at appropriate rates established in the schedule of rates, fees and penalties. Individual water meters must be placed on the County right-of-way, unless deemed wholly impracticable by the Director of Water/Sewer, and its placement must be approved by the Director of Water/Sewer for Baldwin County. All costs incurred inside the mobile home park to route the water lines to the County right-of-way will be at the expense of the mobile home park owner.

The following citizens provided comments on the proposed amendment:

Tyree Adams, 322 Colony Farm Road, asked if those master metered in the last two years would stay on master meters. He stated the decision of EPD was that there could be no master meters. He stated this situation makes tenants drink unsafe water. He requested further information from the Chair, County Attorney and County Manager.

Brandi Rollins, 1863 Vinson Highway, stated master metering has been a big issue since 2021. She stated her water bill has steadily increased from 2021 to present. It went from \$700 to \$3,000. She stated meters are not being read because some are covered in mud.

Anthony Byrd, 1863 Vinson Highway, Southwood Trailer Park, stated park owners did not request meters, and now the County is telling owners they are going to have to pay to rerun lines.

Jermaine Johnson, 105 Harrisburg Road, stated the water bill is fluctuating, and he feels the County should get rid of the master meter.

Jim Bonner, 218 Highway 49 West, Capitol Mobile Home Park, stated County should consider what this has done to tenants. This expense, as well as trash dumpsters in parks, must be passed on to tenants. He stated this has forced park owners into the utility company business and now the County wants owners to pay to get lines to right-of-way.

Gilda Hall, 180 Carter Place, stated her facility is not on a master meter; however, the problem is outdated plumbing and outdated equipment. She stated the County put the meters where they are currently, and County should be responsible for putting meters where the County wants them. They should also fix the outdated equipment.

Article V: Property Standards-Section 18-105; 18-107; 18-201; 18-207; 18-261.

County Manager Tobar stated definitions of Code Official and rooming unit have been added. Section 18-201 (e) Abandoned vehicle now includes the statement that all exterior property shall be kept free of abandoned vehicles and defines what constitutes an abandoned vehicle.

Section 18-227 addresses occupied rental buildings. It outlines conditions that would make rental dwellings, houses, and residential, commercial or industrial buildings or other similar rental structures unfit for human habitation or occupancy.

Section 18-261 discusses the process for enforcement, violations, applicable remedy periods, and non-compliance.

Tine Behne, 160 Pine Drive NE, stated she felt Section 18.261 could open the door to enforcement officials entering any building. She stated the section on enforcement does not specify "rental".

County Manager Tobar stated two additional comments were received regarding this ordinance prior to this hearing. Section 18-201(e) should include that exterior property shall be kept free of abandoned vehicles "in public view". The other comment is regarding Section 18-227(e) which says inadequate ventilation. The recommendation is for this section to say "inadequate sewer or water heater ventilation".

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further comments or discussion, Chair Davis adjourned the public hearing at 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily C. Davis
Chair

Cynthia K. Cunningham
County Clerk