

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Commissioners address Coronavirus prep, recycling dilemma

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“There is no market for newspaper,” Pct. 4 Commissioner Jody Rutherford said, regarding the county’s recycling program.

Rutherford briefed the court on some of the issues he’s seen and complaints he’s heard at the county’s trash compact stations.

“The employees are not responsible for sorting trash or recyclables. I bet I’ve told 50 people, ‘don’t throw the aluminum foil you used to cook steaks on in with the aluminum cans.’ They don’t want that. The inmates have to dig it out, or we get docked,” Rutherford said, adding he does not believe the county should be in the trash collection business. “If you come here about 5 a.m. every morning like I do, there’s a garbage truck under every tree, flashing and blinking.”

Rutherford said he has fielded accusations from residents that some employees are pocketing the cash payments.

“I’d like to remind residents to stop gossiping and report your concerns to the sheriff. If you observe illegal behavior and don’t report it, you’re just spreading unfounded rumors around the county,” Rutherford said. “I personally resent unfounded accusations like these against county employees.”

Rutherford said residents may pay with a credit card, but they will be charged the 3 percent transaction fees. Or, he said, “I suggest you contract with a trash company, and that way you can use a credit card to pay for your trash collection any time you want.”

Pct. 1 Commissioner Bruce Elikier said the employee at his compact stations works whether it’s raining, shining, sleeting or snowing.

“To impugn his integrity really upsets me,” Elikor said. “They get a lot of guff and i think it’s unfounded.”

Pct. 2 Commissioner Bobby Harris said the facilities are a benefit for county residents, and only those who use it need to pay for it.

“I don’t expect taxpayers to subsidize this,” Harris said. “It’s fee based - if you use the service you have to subsidize the service.”

County Judge Richard Evans concurred the cost burden should rest on residents who use the service.

“Through the years, we always tried to make sure compactor stations did not take money from general fund. It’s not fair to ask people to pay for their own garbage collection and also pay for those who don’t,” Evans said. “I think it has to be at least revenue neutral. If it isn’t, we probably should get out of the business.”

Speaking on the recycling program, Pct. 3 Commissioner Jack Moseley said people continue to try to game the system.

“One lady tried to throw a tricycle and dollhouse in the recyclables bin,” Moseley said, adding when she was told no, she threw them in the ditch further down the road.

“This recycling would not work if sheriff would not allow us to use trustees to sort the recyclables,” Moseley said. “People don’t follow the rules.”

Face masks and the Coronavirus

During his monthly report, Bandera County EMS Director Calvin Plummer told commissioners that face masks and gloves are on national back-order as departments all over the country are preparing for the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

“We’re going to have to get spooled up for this whether we like it or not,” Rutherford said. “Hopefully we’ll never use it and we can store it in the attic.”

County Sheriff Dan Butts suggested compact station employees and inmates who work there wear masks and gloves, in the event they come into contact with bio-hazardous waste.

However, according to U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams, face masks do not prevent the spread of the virus among the general public. Face mask fibers wear out quickly, viruses can also enter the body through the eyes and the most common way it spreads is on hands.

More than 3,000 people have died world-wide from the virus since its outbreak began late last year.

Also in his report, Plummer said first responders drove 12,207 miles, had a 1.59-minute average tone to response time and a 9.93-minute average tone to on scene time. He also said the new Bandera EMS barn is coming along, and may be ready at the beginning of April.