

Flagler School Board to weigh impact fee moratorium

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BUNNELL — Given a lackluster economy, some local leaders say it's time to cut fees on new development.

The Flagler County School Board will discuss a possible moratorium on impact fees during a workshop session Tuesday, joining other local municipalities in halting these fees in hopes of encouraging development.

Flagler County is likely to vote on such a moratorium next month, Commission Chairwoman Barbara Revels said, and Palm Coast City Council members discussed the possibility during a workshop earlier this summer.

The School Board workshop starts at 5 p.m. and a regular meeting will follow at 6 p.m. at the Government Services Building, 1769 E. Moody Boulevard.

The schools currently get about \$400,000 per year in impact fees, said Mike Judd, the district's senior director of school operations. The money can only be used to use for new facilities and the only eligible project on the district's five-year plan is an addition at an existing school, possibly Old Kings Elementary.

Revels, a Realtor, said she agrees with "the premise that we might see more job growth, economic expansion," if the fees are temporarily halted. She plans to attend the workshop to encourage the School Board to support the moratorium. Ultimately, any change would require the county commissioners' approval, but they would not do so "unilaterally without the School Board's support," she said.

"It's the right thing to do, right now, based on the economic struggles that Flagler is facing and we'll be able to reinstate them whenever the need arises," Revels said.

The county charges impact fees of \$5,306 per new single-family home, with \$3,600 going toward educational facilities. Palm Coast charges \$15,270 per home, with the same amount going to the schools.

During the regular meeting, School Board members will consider approving a \$6 million Tax Anticipation Note which will be used to meet current expenses until the district receives tax revenue in the general fund. It will be used to pay expenses from July 1, 2012, to Jan. 15, 2013. T.D. Bank submitted the proposal with the smallest interest rate at 0.6 percent yearly.

The board also will consider approving several policy changes, including allowing non-school teams, when school employees are involved with the team, to use facilities for a flat fee of \$250. The changes also include allowing full-time Florida Virtual School students to play on sports teams at their home zone schools or any other school they could attend according to district policies.

