

County offers chamber \$80,000

By PAM BRANNON
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The Gulf Breeze Area Chamber of Commerce might need a new home, but it won't go hunting empty handed. The Santa Rosa County School board voted last week to pay half of the cost of the building improvements made by the Chamber, and the value of the lost lease due to the school district's sale of the property. The school board voted to pay the Chamber \$80,000-\$90,000 from profits of the sale and the City of Gulf Breeze will give them the same amount.

The Chamber building is sitting on property owned by the school district. The school board allowed Gulf Breeze City to use it, as long as it was used by a non-profit group. The Chamber leases the property from the city

for \$1 a year, and had a 20-year lease. There is still 13 years left on that lease. But the school board decided they needed to liquidate all

properties around the county that are not necessary for school use since the state is cutting back on school budgets so drastically.

School Board member Ed Gray III explained to the board, "The Gulf Breeze Chamber has been very gracious in not fighting us on the sale of that property, even though they have a lease. They understand our budget predicaments. They did get an independent appraisal on what the value of the rest of that

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— John Rogers
Superintendent of Schools

lease would be, as well as an appraisal on the improvements made on the building since the moved in." Gray said those appraisals came back with the lost lease being worth about \$120,000 and the renovations worth from \$40,000 to \$60,000. "The city agrees they have some responsibility in this, since they are actually the ones who signed the 20-year lease," Gray said. "So they have agreed to pay half of the cost, if we can pay half the cost. That would make our part about \$80,000 to \$90,000. This will make it easier for the Chamber to find a new lease someplace else, with some

money in hand to work with." The school board's attorney Paul Green told board members, "You know, you really are not giving a free gratuity to the Chamber. You are actually paying this to help make the sale go through, because since they have a lease they could put the brakes on the whole deal." The school board has received several bids for the property. "I was very surprised at the bids offered," School District Superintendent John Rogers said. "Our original appraisal on that property was between \$950,000 and \$1.1 million. I never imagined we would get bids as high as we did. The high bid, of course, is right at \$1.6 million." The board voted to accept the high bid and to also pay the Gulf Breeze Chamber half of the value of their lost lease and renovations on the property.

PARENTS: Contest child's expulsion

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Board members all agreed they had not received any information ahead of time about the case, and Green said they would receive all the information they needed to make a decision during the hearing.

The school administrators and resource officer from Gulf Breeze Police Dept. said that the student's car had been searched the morning of Sept. 6 on the grounds of Gulf Breeze High. Gulf Breeze High Asst. Principal Daniel Brothers said he had received a call from another parent that morning saying he should search the car because he would probably find marijuana in it. He said he asked the resource officer from Gulf Breeze Police Dept. working at the school that day to go with him to do the search. Brothers and the officer reported finding something that they both believed to be marijuana in the floor board of the passenger's side of the car, as well as some marijuana in the passenger's side door and back floor board. The substance was tested at the police lab and allegedly later determined to indeed be marijuana. Brothers said, "It is my job at the school to act on any reasonable suspicion that might affect the safety of other students."

The student's father was the representative for the family questioning the witnesses. He told the board that the report only mentioned the few seeds in the front floor board of the passenger side. The father gave a photo to school board member showing the small amount found.

Board members reminded the parents that Board policy for expulsion of students is zero tolerance on possession or use of any kind of drugs, alcohol or weapons.

The student's father pointed to page 44 of the Student Code of Conduct, which refers to Florida Statute 893 to define what contraband and drugs are for standards of expulsion. He said if they are going to use the state statute as the base for their policy, they should be using the entire statute. He cited that to legally charge someone with possession, if the drug is not found on their body but in a vehicle, then you must show "constructive possession," which means the person must have knowledge of the marijuana being in the car and some control over it being there.

"This vehicle was jointly occupied, since he gives a ride to two students each morning, and the defendant being close to it does not count as constructive possession... so there are conflicting points of view as to whether the car should have been searched in the first place, since no one said they knew there were drugs in the car," the student's father said. The father said since there was no proof of constructive possession shown, he wanted the school board to dismiss the case and allow his son back into Gulf Breeze High. The school attorney explained that his was not a "criminal prosecution," and the board is "not bound by the same legal statutes as a criminal prosecution would be." He said some of the school board's policies might not be

covered under state law, since they are not trying to prosecute any student. All of the statute may not matter in an expulsion case, since the school board had adopted a zero tolerance policy for any drug possession of any kind. The entire state statute would apply to a legal court case, if the student was being charged legally with drug possession.

Asst. Principal Brothers said all students who drive to school must sign a parking permit and have their parents sign it. The parking permit for this student was presented to the board, showing the signature of the boy and his mother. That permit states that if you bring a car to the school grounds, you will be responsible for anything found in the car. Brothers said that the permit also states that if the student and parent sign it and bring a vehicle to school, then the student and parents understand that the school administrators will have the right to search it upon request at any time for any reason. He said this was also in the student code of conduct and the student handbook.

The student's father asked Brothers if he had any proof that his son knew there was pot in the car, and Brothers said, "Only the signed statement from your son saying it was his, after we asked him about it." The student's father said that statement was signed under duress, with no parents or attorney present.

When the father later called his son as a witness and asked him if he knew how the marijuana got into the car that morning, and the son said no, he did not have any idea. The father also

asked him if there had been any use of pot in the car that morning, on the way to school, and the boy said absolutely not.

The school administrators said they were not saying whether it was or was not the student's marijuana — just that it was found in his car, and with the signed permit and the student code of conduct, that is grounds for expulsion.

School Board members Ed Gray III of Gulf Breeze and Joan Simpson of Pace had questions. Gray asked the student, "Do you know of anyone at all that might not like you, and might want to plant it in your car, and then make sure a call was made?" The student said no, that he believed no one has access to his car and had no one that he thought would plant it, but that he had absolutely no idea how the marijuana got into the car floorboard.

JoAnn Simpson asked the administrators to read the student code of conduct referring to statute 893 and explain why that part of that statute was being used. It was read and explained that the part of the statute used only outlines what contraband substances are, under state law.

The final recommendation to the school board came from Superintendent John Rogers, who said, "We challenge our administrators and resource officers every day to keep a safe environment in our schools, and it is a challenging job to say the least." He recommended the expulsion of the Gulf Breeze High student remain in place, and the school board voted unanimously to not overturn the expulsion.

REPAIRS: Budgeted

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member Diane Coleman said Navarre High is growing so fast this will be a much needed improvement. Altogether the board approved the construction of almost 50 new classrooms countywide.

They also approved the design phase to begin for the building of a new Jay High School, but that would come under special projects with special funding.

The capital outlay budget for this year is \$25 million. The board was told that if all of the classrooms are built that are on the list that would take \$15 million of the budget to complete.

COURTHOUSE: Funding at risk

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Stewart said he did not believe any committee would be able to come back to the commission with any recommendations until at least next June or July, and by then the commission would have a good idea of what impact Tallahassee has had on next year's budget and the use of one cent sales tax options for funding.

Commissioner John Broxson of Gulf Breeze said, "This board can make the decision of where to put a courthouse and it can make the decision of how to fund it. That is why the people elected us, to make those kind of decisions. We have not made a decision about the courthouse because we run into financial roadblocks for such a large pro-

ject every time we think about doing it. My thought is I do not want to frustrate a group of volunteers who give up their time and get all excited and then nothing comes of what study they do... No question — we have to do something about a judicial building. But I think we should wait and see what the state legislators have in store for us, and then we can decide."

Commissioner Gordon Goodin of Navarre cautioned that some properties being looked at right now for a courthouse will be sold soon if the commission doesn't do anything. "I now don't think a committee is necessary. This board will need to make the final decision anyway, especially on finding funding. But, the thing we need to keep in mind right now

is the properties we have been considering for possible sites. Those are selling, and they will not be available by next summer. We do have the site next to the jail, and if we are happy with that, then fine. But I think we do need to have a goal date, like maybe Jan. 29, to make some decisions."

Commissioner Bob Cole said, "If I was forced to vote today about a new courthouse, I would say put it on the site next to the jail, have the inmates walk their butts over to the courthouse, and pay for it with a one cent sales tax. And this time really educate the public as to why it is so necessary to get this done."

Stewart tabled the idea of a committee, but asked that some public hearings be held the first of the year for public input.

Calendar of Events

Thursday, Nov. 1
SRC Tourist Development Council North End Committee 8:30 a.m. SRC Chamber of Commerce, 5247 Stewart St, Milton

Education Task Force Meeting 11:30 AM- 1 PM at Oriole Beach Elementary School, 1260 Oriole Beach Rd., Gulf Breeze

Lecture: IHMC will host a public lecture by William Swartout on at the IHMC, 40 South Alcaniz Street. Topic: "Toward the Holodeck" Reception, 5:30 pm and talk at 6 pm. RSVP: 202-4462

Sant Rosa County Zoning Board of Adjustments 5:30 p.m. County Administrative Center, Commissioner's Board Room, 6495 Caroline Street, Milton, FL

Friday, Nov. 2
No meetings as of press time

Saturday, Nov. 3
No meetings as of press time

Sunday, Nov. 4
Fall backwards -- Set your clocks back an hour to observe Central Standard Time.

Monday, Nov. 5
Santa Rosa County Commission Committee 9 a.m., County Administrative Center,

Commissioner's Board Room, 6495 Caroline Street, Milton.

Gulf Breeze City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m. Gulf Breeze City Hall, Council Chambers, 1070 Shoreline Drive, Gulf Breeze

Tuesday, Nov. 6
Santa Rosa County Subdivision Design Public Workshop 10 a.m. 6051 Old Bagdad Hwy Media Room

Santa Rosa County Marine Advisory Committee 5 p.m., County Administrative Center, Commissioner's Board Room, 6495 Caroline Street, Milton.

Development Review Board, November 6, 6:30 p.m. Gulf Breeze City Hall, Council Chambers, 1070 Shoreline Drive, Gulf Breeze

Wednesday, Nov. 7
Governmental Affairs Meeting 12 noon - 1 p.m., Gulf Breeze City Hall, 1070 Shoreline Dr. Lunch provided for \$9. Reservations requested. Call (850) 932-7888.

Thursday, Nov. 8
SRC Housing Coalition 1:30 p.m. 6051 Old Bagdad Hwy, Milton Conference Room

CRA: Site too small

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from Live Oak St. and Northcliffe Dr.

Adjoining property owner Dan Greene, Live Oak of Gulf Breeze, LLC, says he has been contacted about selling his property. "We have just started to have to make a lot of repairs on our building, and just replaced our air conditioner. We have gone a long time without a lot of maintenance and we have a great situation with our tenants, but we have gone back and forth with them a few times."

Additional lots to the north of the Live Oak of Gulf Breeze, LLC lots are owned by David and Mary Butler. The lot dimensions are 100 feet by 170 feet and a 7,000 sq. ft. building currently stands on the lots. The two lots straddle Duncan Subdivision and the Northcliffe Subdivision and extend all the way to the back of the Post Office. The Butlers have not yet been contacted about a sale of their property.

CRA guidelines for landscaping and design will limit the space for development, and could require underground water retention, a growing trend in Northwest Florida as land values increase.

"Moulton Properties is using underground ground water systems on their new development now," Eddy explains.

FOG GB, LLC bought the property from the church for \$1,650,000. RMC Property Group is pursuing the development efforts.

The church council will meet Nov. 1 to vote how to allocate the funds and a church charge conference will follow on Nov. 19 to ratify the council's suggestion. The council is expected to propose paying down debt on the new education building and name it in honor of Mark X. and Eloise Benson. The church bought out one legal and binding lease from a tenant in the building prior to its sale, and most have relocated.

Elected Officials CONTACT

GULF BREEZE ELECTED OFFICIALS
1070 Shoreline Dr., Gulf Breeze, FL 32561; (850) 934-5100

Mayor LANE GILCHRIST
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RICHARD FULFORD
(850) 932-5135
rfulford@co.gulf-breeze.fl.us

SANTA ROSA COUNTY COMMISSION
6495 Caroline Street, Milton, FL 32570; (850) 932-1340 or 983-1877

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(850) 932-2617
comm-broxson@co.santa-rosa.fl.us

GORDON GOODIN, Dist. 4
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BOB COLE, Dist. 2
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comm-cole@co.santa-rosa.fl.us

TOM STEWART, Dist. 1
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comm-stewart@co.santa-rosa.fl.us

SANTA ROSA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
5086 Canal St., Milton, FL 32570; (850) 983-5000

ED GRAY III, Dist. 5
(850) 932-6287

JOANN J. SIMPSON, Dist. 4
(850) 994-5446

DIANE COLEMAN, Dist. 3
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HUGH WINKLES, Dist. 2
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DIANE SCOTT, Dist. 1
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U.S. SENATORS

Senator MEL MARTINEZ (R)
315 E. Robinson St., Landmark Center 1, Ste. 475, Orlando, FL 32801
(407) 254-2573

Senator NELSON, BILL (D)
US Court House Annex, 111 N. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL 32301
(850) 942-8415

Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office Report

Information provided by the Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office.

Felonies
10/22/07
Ashcraft III, Jack Dewayne, 24, W/M, 2500 block Salmanca St. Navarre, Failure to appear
10/24/07
Millan, Tyler Victor, 16, H/M, 8900 block Ellen Ct., Navarre, 4 counts larceny
Briggs, Aaron David, 17, W/M, 7000 block Brighton Oaks Blvd., Navarre, 4 counts larceny
Soles, Christine Lee, 32, W/F, 7000 block Webster St., Navarre Failure to appear
Erickson, Joshua Robert, 20, B/M, 3200 block College Ct., Gulf Breeze, Fugitive from Justice
Hannah, Lennard Tremayne, 22, B/M, 1200 block Redwood Ln., Gulf Breeze, Probation violation
10/25/07

Taylor, Chantal Yvonne, 43, B/F, 1300 block Sanibel Ln., Gulf Breeze, Aggrav. Battery - D/V
DUI
10/23/07
Andis, Charles Allen, 39, W/M, 2100 block Prever Ln., Gulf Breeze, 2nd offense

10/24/07
Curry, Michelle Dupuy, 40, W/F 100 block Stearns St., Gulf Breeze
10/25/07
Walton, Jacob Scott, 19, W/M, 1600 block Kauai Ct., Gulf Breeze, DUI and Damage Property