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Leon County Board of County Commissioners Agenda Item#26

December 9, 2025

To:	Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board
From:	Vincent S. Long, County Administrator
Title:	First and Only Public Hearing to Consider Adopting a Resolution of Intent to Utilize the Uniform Method for the Levy, Collection, and Enforcement of Non-Ad Valorem Assessments for the Purpose of Collecting the Full Amount of all Charges Related to Sewer Service Imposed on Certain Real Property Located in Woodville Septic-to-Sewer System Phase 1 Project Area

Review and Approval:	Vincent S. Long, County Administrator
Department/Division Review and Approval:	Ken Morris, Assistant County Administrator Nawfal Ezzagaghi, Assistant County Administrator Brent Pell, Director, Public Works Charles Wu, Director, Engineering Services
Lead Staff/Project Team:	Anna Padilla, Stormwater Management Coordinator

Statement of Issue:

This item requests the Board conduct the first and only public hearing to consider adopting the proposed Resolution of Intent to utilize the uniform method of collection for the levy, collection, and enforcement of non-ad valorem assessments for the purpose of collecting the full amount of all charges related to sewer service imposed on certain real property located in the Woodville Septic-to-Sewer System Phase 1 Project Area.

Fiscal Impact:

This item has no fiscal impact.

Staff Recommendation:

Option #1: Conduct the first and only public hearing and adopt the Resolution of Intent to Utilize the Uniform Method of Collection for the Levy, Collection, and Enforcement of Non-Ad Valorem Assessments for the purposes of collecting the full amount of all charges related to sewer service imposed on certain real property located in the Woodville Septic-to-Sewer System Phase 1 Project Area.

Report and Discussion

Background:

This item requests the Board conduct the first and only public hearing to consider adopting the proposed Resolution of Intent (Attachment #1) to utilize the uniform method for the levy, collection, and enforcement of non-ad valorem assessments for the purpose of collecting the full amount of all charges related to sewer service imposed on certain real property located in the Woodville Septic-to-Sewer System Phase 1 Project Area. The completion of Phase 1 of the Woodville Septic-to-Sewer project marks a major milestone in advancing the Board's strategic initiatives in southern Leon County and protecting water quality in the region.

The project area consists of 175 properties, including 152 developed parcels and 23 vacant parcels, all of which will have centralized sewer service available. Of the developed properties, 101 property owners requested and received a connection to the new sewer system during construction, while other developed parcels elected to remain on their existing septic systems. The non-ad valorem assessment will apply to parcels within the project area that are not currently served by City Utilities—that is, properties without a metered City utility account for water, gas, or electric service. In the spring, the City will provide the official list of parcels that will be subject to the assessment, including identification of properties with existing metered City utility accounts and the associated assessment amounts. This information will be included in the July 2026 assessment roll adoption agenda item. The assessment will be used to collect both a readiness-to-serve charge, which supports the City's ongoing costs to operate and maintain the sewer system and ensure its availability for future connections, and a sewer service charge, which applies only to properties actively connected to the system without a City utility account (*details further discussed in the Analysis section below*).

The Woodville Sewer System Project is the County's fourth septic-to-sewer project in southern Leon County, undertaken in coordination with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the City of Tallahassee. This substantial investment provides significant public benefits, including protection of local waterbodies, while minimizing costs for property owners. As referenced earlier, property owners were able to connect to the sanitary sewer system at no cost, up to three months before project completion, representing a savings of over \$10,000 per connection. **A total of 101 property owners took advantage of this opportunity**, receiving the full benefit of the County-funded connection. This work included installation of a lateral line from the sewer main line to the structure, connection to the sewer system, and abandonment of the septic system. For properties still served by well water, a connection from the water system was made and the well was abandoned. After project completion and transfer of the system to the City of Tallahassee, property owners will be responsible for all sewer service fees for ongoing use and maintenance.

The Woodville Septic-to-Sewer System Project advances the following FY 2022 – FY 2026 Strategic Initiative and Bold Goal:

- *Ensure County's water quality and stormwater regulations, programs and projects are evaluated and implemented holistically to advance the County's adopted strategic priority: to protect the quality and supply of our water. (2022-16)*

- *Upgrade or Eliminate 500 Septic Tanks in the Primary Springs Protection Zone. (BG2)*

This Strategic Initiative aligns with the Board's Environmental Strategic Priorities:

- *(EN1) Protect the quality and supply of our water.*
- *(EN2) Conserve and protect environmentally sensitive lands and our natural ecosystems.*

On October 20, 2020, the County and City entered into an Interlocal Agreement for the Provision of Sewer Service to the Woodville Rural Community (the "Interlocal Agreement") (Attachment #2), which defines each party's roles and responsibilities. Under this Agreement, the County committed to complete the design, engineering, permitting, property acquisition, and construction of the sewer system, funded in part through a Springs Restoration Grant from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). Upon completion, the City will assume ownership, operation, maintenance, repair, and replacement of the system.

Per Section 5 of the Interlocal Agreement, properties with a metered City utility account (e.g., an account with the City for water, gas, or electrical service) will have recurring sewer service charges billed through that account. If a property does not have a metered City utility account, the County will collect and remit the full amount of all sewer service charges to the City annually through a non-ad valorem assessment on the property owner's annual property tax bill.

In accordance with Section 197.3632, Florida Statutes, a non-ad valorem assessment—appearing on the annual property tax bill—will be used to collect sewer service charges from properties within the service area that do not have a metered City utility account.

Analysis:

In accordance with Section 197.3632, Florida Statutes, a Resolution of Intent to utilize the uniform method for the levy, collection, and enforcement of non-ad valorem assessments must be adopted at a public hearing prior to January 1 of the year in which a local government intends to use this method. This assessment will collect sanitary sewer service charges for properties in the Woodville Sewer System Phase 1 Project area without a metered City utility account. The

assessments will be payable to the Tax Collector, with the County remitting the full amount to the City as outlined in the Interlocal Agreement.

The Woodville Septic-to-Sewer Phase 1 collection system provides service to 175 parcels (152 developed and 23 vacant properties) along Woodville Highway from Rhodes Cemetery Road to Natural Bridge Road including areas along Oak Ridge Road West and Page Road west of Woodville Highway.

Construction of the Woodville Septic-to-Sewer Phase 1 collection system was completed in Fiscal Year 2025. Two remaining sewer lateral service connections on one private property are pending for grinder pump delivery and anticipated to be completed next month.

On November 18, 2025, the Board approved the final easement transfer, completing the process necessary for the City to assume responsibility for the Woodville Sewer Phase 1 system. The City of Tallahassee is assuming ownership, operation, and maintenance of the sewer collection system.

Once the system is accepted, property owners will be responsible for sewer service charges, which include readiness-to-serve charges for all properties and usage charges for those connected to the system. For properties without a metered City utility account, these charges will be assessed on the property's annual tax bill and determined by the property's connection status. The annual assessment amounts are set by the City based on the current rate structure and may increase each year in accordance with the consumer price index. For reference, the November 2025 tax bills for properties where the County completed septic-to-sewer projects included an annual sewer charge assessment of \$1,093.83 for properties connected to sewer and \$454.80 for properties without sewer service.

Sewer service charges are set by the City in accordance with City ordinances and policies, subject to annual adjustment based on the consumer price index, and are calculated as follows:

- Readiness-to-Serve Charge: The readiness-to-serve charge is a fixed charge imposed on all properties in the service area, pursuant to Section 21-402(b), Tallahassee Code of Ordinances. The charge is intended to cover a portion of the City's costs of operating and maintaining the sewer system and other costs incurred to ensure the sewer system is ready and available to customers.
- Usage Charges: Sewer usage charges are only applicable to properties connected to the sanitary sewer system. Usage charges are generally based

on the amount of wastewater generated by a property and are calculated based on the amount of potable water the property uses. However, for properties that do not receive City potable water, they are instead charged with a flat sewer service usage rate pursuant to Section 21-402(c), Tallahassee Code of Ordinances. This flat usage charge is calculated by multiplying the prior year average annual sewer volume for a single-family residential City utility customer in Leon County by the City usage charge billing rate.

- City Surcharge: Additional fees for service outside the City limits, as authorized by Section 21-127 of the Tallahassee Code of Ordinances, the County/City Water and Sewer Agreement, and the County/City Parks and Recreation Agreement.

For the Woodville Septic-to-Sewer System Phase 1 Project Area, the first assessment will cover the period beginning upon City acceptance and the first full fiscal year of service. The County will consider adoption of the assessment roll at a public hearing prior to September 15, 2026, with property owners first seeing the assessment on their November 2026 tax bills. In the spring, the City will provide the list of properties to be assessed and the associated amounts, which will be included in the July 2026 assessment roll adoption agenda item.

This item seeks Board approval to conduct the first and only public hearing for the adoption of the Resolution of Intent for certain real property located in the Woodville Septic-to-Sewer System Phase 1 Project Area. The Notice of Public Hearing has been published in the local paper for four consecutive weeks, as required by Section 197.3632, Florida Statutes (Attachment #3).

Options:

1. Conduct the first and only public hearing and adopt the Resolution of Intent to Utilize the Uniform Method of Collection for the Levy, Collection, and Enforcement of Non-Ad Valorem Assessments for the purposes of collecting the full amount of all charges related to sewer service imposed on certain real property located in the Woodville Septic-to-Sewer System Phase 1 Project Area.
2. Conduct the first and only public hearing and do not adopt the Resolution of Intent to Utilize the Uniform Method of Collection for the Levy, Collection, and Enforcement of Non-Ad Valorem Assessments for the purposes of collecting the full amount of all charges related to sewer service imposed on certain real property located in the Woodville Septic-to-Sewer System Phase 1 Project Area.
3. Board direction.

Recommendation:

Option #1

Attachments:

1. [Resolution of Intent to Utilize the Uniform Method for the Levy, Collection, and Enforcement of Non-Ad Valorem Assessments for the purposes of collecting the full amount of all charges related to sewer service imposed on certain real property located in the Woodville Septic-to-Sewer System Phase 1 Project Area](#)
2. [Interlocal Agreement for the Provision of Sewer Service to Woodville Rural Community](#)
3. [Notice of Public Hearing](#)

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