

Resolutions passed concerning utility operations

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LAKE COUNTY – The Lake County Board of Commissioners passed two resolutions for the Lake County Department of Utilities which required more explanation and discussion than usual at the July 17 commissioners meeting.

The first was a resolution authorizing execution of a sanitary sewer administrative order on consent with the U.S. EPA.

"This is the result of an audit by the federal EPA. It was done in October of 2012, and subsequently, the following July they gave us a report and that report had two recommendations," said Director Rick Martin.

He said one recommendation was for LCDU to have a more detailed capacity management operation and maintenance (CMOM) program, although LCDU already had six of the seven recommendations in place. Another was to look in other places for inflow and infiltration (I&I) problems.

Other recommended areas of focus are the whole collection system's capabilities, put infrastructure goals down on paper, and put stricter rules in place—and enforce them.

Martin said the discussion could lead to surcharges for putting certain products into the sewer system.

"There's no fines issued; there's no things like we've seen in neighboring counties where it's going to be stuff that we have to do immediately for big rate increases;

there's none of that," Martin said.

The second resolution approved amending the sanitary sewerage, solid waste, and water supply rules and regulations of the Lake County Department of Utilities.

Board President Dan Troy said these were updates and changes to LCDU standard regulations as needed per experiences, changes in technology and for other reasons.

"There is one change that is a somewhat significant change in the way Utilities, from a sanitary sewer standpoint, does business with the customers," said Denis Yurkovich, deputy sanitary engineer, "and that is the change to recommend we go to overhead plumbing or something called high wall plumbing requirements as far as the point of connection to sanitary sewers. Basically what this does is eliminate gravity connections of basement service ..."

He said the requirement is that there needs to be a mechanical means of directing sewage from basement bathroom facilities to the first floor.

This was changed because in recent flooding events, it was found houses which had high wall plumbing did not have basement flooding like neighboring homes did.

Troy pointed out the regulations will apply to new construction; current buildings do not have to make changes in the plumbing.

He also noted there is an appeals board if someone believes the rules should not apply in a particular case.