

25-013-037 and authorize the Chairman to sign all award documents, seconded by Commissioner Wisenbaker. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Opioid Litigation - Six (6) Remnant Defendants

Assistant Finance Director, Rachel Bowen, presented the item. Mrs. Bowen stated a settlement agreement has been reached by six (6) Remnant Defendants to provide financial resources to combat the opioid epidemic across the United States. Special Counsel has advised Lowndes County to participate in this settlement to receive funds to help abate the opioid crisis. In order to participate in the settlement, Board approval is requested to authorize the Chairman to execute the necessary settlement documents. Commissioner Marshall asked how much longer the County is expected to receive the funds. Mrs. Bowen responded that each settlement has different terms and timelines. She stated the County is currently participating in several settlements that will continue to provide funding for several years. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the item as presented, seconded by Commissioner Evans. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Potable Well Testing

Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated due to ongoing issues with water quality at Alapaha Plantation and Stone Creek, staff along with Lovell Engineering Associates met with Scott Sigler, Hydrogeologist with Jim Stidham & Associates of Tallahassee, Florida. Mr. Sigler brings extensive experience working with municipalities in North Florida and South Georgia on well field development and issues related to the Floridan Aquifer. After reviewing test data from two of our wells, Mr. Sigler recommended extensive testing on the Alapaha Plantation Well #3 and the Stone Creek remote well to determine whether these wells can be restored to service. The cost of the recommended services is \$43,910.00, per well. Staff recommends approval of the potable well testing by Jim Stidham & Associates in the total amount of \$87,820.00. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the item as presented, seconded by Commissioner Smith. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes, stated there have been questions related to the current drought category. Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey provided the commission with an update and stated the Georgia Environmental Protection Division has issued a Level 1 drought response following months of dry conditions and growing concerns regarding water resources. Mrs. Dukes asked Fire Rescue Chief, Billy Young, to address the commission regarding the wildfires. Chief Young stated the Clinch/Echols County fire is currently at 32,541 acres at 23 percent containment. The Highway 82 fire in Brantley County is currently 22,600 acres and 32 percent contained. Chief Young mentioned Lowndes County Fire Rescue personnel are expected to return home tomorrow. Chief Young mentioned a current concern is "reburns" which occur when a wildfire burns over an area that has previously burned. Vegetation not fully consumed during the initial fire can later fall and ignite, creating additional flare-ups. Chairman Slaughter asked Chief Young to convey the commission's gratitude and appreciation to the personnel representing Lowndes County. Mrs. Dukes mentioned hurricane preparedness week begins next week. Additionally, on Monday, May 4th at 9:00 a.m. a proclamation presentation recognizing National Small Business Week will be held at 106 South Patterson Street to celebrate small businesses. Commissioner Marshall requested citizens to honor the current burn ban. Chairman Slaughter reiterated that until the burn ban is lifted, residents should understand how quickly a fire can spread and become uncontrollable.