

County Transit to get new bus via federal stimulus

By David Seckinger
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Commissioner Bill Kendall held a special called meeting on Apr. 22 in an effort to purchase a new bus for the county, and the good news is the federal government is going to foot the bill.

County employee Jim Barnes has been working on a grant for the new bus, which is expected to cost \$73,300. Barnes said federal stimulus money will pay for the transportation, but the county has to act now to get the money because it is going fast.

The county began its public transportation program in February 2008 with the purchase of two busses. Both busses are the size of a small school bus and have wheelchair lifts on the side of the vehicles. Barnes said

most of the passengers who use public transportation are retired people who use them for medical reasons.

One problem with the current busses is the location of the wheelchair lift.

Since the lifts are on the sides of the vehicles, there is not enough room in certain places in the county for them to operate easily.

Therefore, the new bus (which is a van with a high roof) will have its wheelchair lift on the rear of the vehicle, so it can back into tight places the other busses couldn't go.

Barnes said operating the busses is expensive, so the county is going to give one of its current busses back to the state, in order to operate at the same cost.