

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
February 19, 2019
Warner Robins, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday February 19, 2019 at the Houston County Annex in Warner Robins, Georgia with Chairman Stalnaker presiding and Commissioners McMichael, Walker, Robinson, and Thomson present. Also present were County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Barry Holland, Director of Purchasing Mark Baker, Director of Personnel Ken Carter, Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Chief Tax Appraiser James Moore, Middle Georgia Regional Commission Executive Director Laura Mathis, Clarence Long, and Walton and Becky Wood.

Commissioner McMichael gave the invocation.

Lt. Col. William Strickland, US Air Force led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and briefed the Board on his military service. After high school AFROTC he received his mechanical engineering degree at the University of Alabama and was then commissioned in the Air Force. His career field as an Acquisition Officer has taken him to Wright-Patterson AFB, OH working with flight simulators; to Egypt working with the Egyptian military; to Marietta, GA at the Lockheed-Martin plant working on the C-5M Super Galaxy; San Antonio, TX with the Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Agency; Eglin AFB, FL working on the F-15 flight test software; and finally to Robins AFB in March of 2016 where he serves as a Program Manager for various aircraft. His wife and two children accompanied him to the meeting. Lt. Col. Strickland stated that he and his family enjoy it here and may retire here in the future.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Troop Leader Anna Lilley of Boy Scout Troop 566 and the scout members who were present. Each scout is working toward their Citizenship in the Community merit badge.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the meeting of February 5, 2019.

Mr. Walker presented a proposed GebCorp Retirement Plan amendment that allows for a pre-retirement death benefit for employees who are eligible to retire but wish to continue to work.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing all documents necessary including the resolution to amend the Defined Benefit Retirement Plan for Houston County allowing for a pre-retirement death benefit for current and future plan participants.

Mr. Walker presented a request from the Board of Tax Assessors along with Chief Tax Appraiser James Moore to eliminate one Tax Appraiser II position to allow for the certification classification of appraisers who have earned their state certifications for the next appraiser level. The overall result of the position elimination and certification changes will result in a savings of \$26,820 in the Tax Assessor Department.

Continued from page 1603

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve the elimination of one currently vacant Tax Appraiser II position (#37) and to allow for the certification classification of one Tax Appraiser III position to a Tax Appraiser IV (#34) and three certification classifications of Tax Appraiser II positions to Tax Appraiser III (#33) effective on February 26, 2019.

Mr. Walker presented a request from the City of Warner Robins for annexation of 1.299 acres located at the southwest corner of Chilton Place and Butten Drive.

Chairman Stalnaker confirmed with Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar that the water service should be a single meter and not a master meter at this location.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to concur with a City of Warner Robins annexation request, with the stipulation that water service will be a single meter not a master meter, for the property described as:

Property located at the southwest corner of Chilton Place and Butten Drive comprising 1.299 acres (being a portion of Tax Parcel 00077D 209000) as shown on a plat of survey drawn by John W. Wilkes, G.R.L.S. 2738, for Lieus, dated December 14, 2018.

Mr. Thomson presented a request from the City of Perry for annexation of property totaling 87.85 acres at 1904 Hwy. 127 and the property at 1824 Houston Lake Road.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to concur with a City of Perry annexation request for the property located at 1824 Houston Lake Road and 1904 Hwy. 127 (HC00560 04800 and 00056 06200) comprising 87.85 acres further described as:

All that tract or parcel of land situate, lying and being in Land Lots 110, 114, and 115 of the 10th Land District of Houston County, Georgia and being a total of 87.85 acres being shown and designated as an 84.03 acre tract as well as an adjoining 3.82 acre tract which is designated as insert "A" on that property survey for Jacobs Family Properties, dated October 22, 1998, prepared by John Dye, Registered Land Surveyor No. 940, recorded in Plat Book 53, Page 181, Houston County Georgia deed records.

Houston County would retain both the water and sanitation services at this property.

County Attorney Tom Hall presented the second reading of an amendment to Section 2-217 of the Code of Ordinances, Houston County. The first reading of this proposed amendment was held at the February 5, 2019 Houston County Board of Commissioners meeting.

Chairman Stalnaker closed the regular meeting and opened a public hearing.

As there were no comments Chairman Stalnaker closed the public hearing and reopened the regular meeting.

Continued on page 1605

Continued from page 1604

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve an amendment to Section 2-217; of the Code of Ordinances, Houston County Georgia by changing the number of office term years from three to four the section shall read as follows:

Sec. 2-217.- Appointment of members; terms of office.

The members of the library board shall be appointed by the Houston County Board of Commissioners and will be reflective of all areas of the Houston County, incorporated and unincorporated. The term of office shall be four years. Board members shall receive no compensation but may be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the performance of library business.

Mr. Thomson presented a request for underground right of way easement for Flint Energies to accommodate the outdoor lighting at the new parking lot for the E-911 Center.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to authorize Chairman Stalnaker signing the underground right of way easement with Flint Electric Membership Corporation as depicted on Exhibit A and as described on Exhibit B for the underground power line for outdoor lighting at the new parking lot for the E-911 Center. Houston County is responsible for the \$4,800 initial construction and \$16 per month per fixture for three fixtures.

Mr. Thomson presented a Quit Claim deed that would convey a tract of land on A.E. Harris Road from the Houston County Board of Commissioners to the Development Authority of Houston County for economic development.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to authorize Chairman Stalnaker signing the Quit Claim deed to convey a tract of land on A.E. Harris Road to the Development Authority of Houston County and to sign the agreement detailing the specifics of the transfer with the Development Authority of Houston County in order to have the Development Authority of Houston County attempt to sell the property for economic development purposes.

The property is more particularly described as follow:

All that tract or parcel of land situate, lying and being in Land Lots 18, 19 and 24 of the Thirteenth Land District of Houston County, Georgia, and being all of Tract 3, containing 15.00 acres and all of that portion of Tract 2 located in the aforesaid land lots lying south of A.E. Harris Road as shown on a plat of survey recorded in Plat Book 67, Page a69, Clerk's Office, Houston Superior Court. The property being conveyed lies easterly of that certain 14.719-acre, Parcel B, as shown on a plat of survey recorded in Plat Book 71, Page 11, Clerk's Office Houston Superior Court. The said plats and the record thereof are incorporated herein by reference for all purposes.

Chairman Stalnaker clarified that if the property did not sell by the specified date that the Development Authority would covey the property back to the County.

Mr. McMichael presented a request for the release of a maintenance bond for Phase 5 of Amelia Place Subdivision that has been completed in accordance with the Comprehensive Land Development Regulations.

Continued on page1606

Continued from page 1605

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve the release of the maintenance bond (State Bank Letter of Credit #28413239717, Expires March 2, 2019) on Amelia Place Subdivision Phase 5.

Mr. McMichael presented a correction on a bid approved at the February 5, 2019 Houston County Board of Commissioners meeting on three trucks for the Water Department. The total difference in cost adds \$826 to the total approved bringing it to \$64,541.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the correction of a previous bid award from February 5, 2019 to read the award of one new 2019 RAM 1500 regular cab pick-up at a unit cost of \$20,963 and the award of two new 2019 RAM 1500 quad cab pick-up trucks at a unit cost of \$21,789 for use in the Water Department from McLarty Dodge of Huntsville, AL. Total vehicle award of \$64,541 will come from Water capital funds.

Mr. McMichael presented an update to the Service Delivery Strategy (SDS). Although we are not due to update the SDS for another eight years, the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has released new guidance that requires any housing assistance provided to individual homeowners through grants be listed in our SDS. The City of Perry requested this update in support of a grant application that they have made for funding. In addition, we will also take the opportunity to update the SDS to clarify that grants (of any type) are acceptable funding sources for all local governments.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to authorize Chairman Stalnaker signing the resolution updating the County's Service Delivery Strategy to be submitted to the Department of Community Affairs.

Ms. Robinson presented a request from Victor and Sandra Sanicharra for the County to abandon the right of way in front of their residence at 233 Tucker Road. Staff recommends denial.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to deny the application to abandon the right of way of Tucker Road submitted by Victor and Sandra Sanicharra.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for grant acceptance of funding meant to supplement the original 2019 Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant award accepted at the October 16, 2018 Board meeting.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing all documents necessary to accept \$1,520 of federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant funds to be administered by the Solicitor-General for use in funding the Victim Assistance Program in Houston County State Court.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$1,080,149.03.

Continued on page 1607

Chairman Stalnaker closed the regular meeting and opened the meeting for public comments.

Sherman Falana, 114 Country Squire Road, Perry stated that he recently heard of an employee of the County was that seeking to have gender reassignment surgery and wanted the County's health insurance to pay for it.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that there would be no change to the County's health plan during the 2019 year.

Mr. Falana wondered why Sgt. Lange thought that this was work related; why the taxpayers should pay for an elective surgery; and where would the County draw the line with other employees desiring elective surgeries of various types if they did approve this for Sgt. Lange. He felt that the County should not change its health plan to cover these types of surgeries.

Jim Marquardt, Perry-Houston County Airport Manager, thanked the Board for the surplus vehicles for use as crew cars at the airport, thanked Mr. McMichael for helping the Authority find a bank with better money market rates, and then updated the Board on the status of the Airport including fuel sales, new equipment obtained through surplus, a GDOT grant for design on the new runway apron, and the uptick in corporate aircraft coming to the airport.

Chairman Stalnaker thanked Mr. Marquardt for his leadership at the airport along with the Authority members.

Sgt. Anna Lange, Houston County Sheriff Department, stated that she is a sergeant with the criminal investigations division of the Sheriff's Department, has twelve years of service to the County, and is a transgender female who has been denied coverage under the County's health plan. Sgt. Lange stated that she was originally told by Blue Cross and Blue Shield that the surgery would be covered but was later denied even though the gender transition was medically necessary. Sgt. Lange feels discriminated against because the County refuses to make the necessary changes to the County's insurance plan and asked the Board to vote to remove the exclusion.

Noah Lewis, attorney and Executive Director of Transcend Legal, stated that Sgt. Lange consulted with Transcend Legal after the coverage denial seeking equal treatment and health care equity. Attorney Lewis stated that correspondence to the County asking for mediation concerning this matter elicited no response from County Attorney Tom Hall. Although they would like to avoid legal action, if the Board does not remove the exclusion by the next Commissioner's meeting on March 5th a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission will be filed.

County Attorney Tom Hall stated that although an answer to the correspondence was prepared it was held after Sgt. Lange and Transcend informed the County that they would be asking for an audience at this Board meeting. Mr. Hall stated that the County's insurance plan does not include that type of coverage and that the County Commission is not considering adding it to its plan this year. Mr. Hall also stated that he has advised the Commission and staff members not to discuss this matter due to potential litigation.

Continued from page 1607

There being no further comments Chairman closed the public comments part of the meeting and reopened the regular meeting.

Chairman Stalnaker opened the meeting for Commissioner comments.

Mr. Walker thanked everyone for coming and commented that Houston County is a great place to live.

Ms. Robinson thanked everyone for coming and participating in the meeting.

Mr. Thomson thanked both Sheriff's deputies for providing security for the meeting.

Mr. McMichael remarked that Mr. Ansel Peck had recently been hospitalized and to keep him in our thoughts and prayers while he recovers.

Chairman Stalnaker announced that there would be a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Lake Joy Fire Station in two to three weeks. He thanked Director of Purchasing Mark Baker and Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar for their involvement in the project. He also asked everyone to continue to keep Chief Williams in their thoughts and prayers.

Chairman Stalnaker closed the Commissioners Comments and reopened the regular meeting.

Motion to Adjourn by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all, meeting adjourned.

Barry Holland
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner