

**Houston County Commissioners Meeting
October 16, 2018
Warner Robins, Georgia**

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday October 16, 2018 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 Operations Robbie Dunbar, Director of Personnel Ken Carter, Director of Purchasing Mark Baker, Fire / HEMA Chief Jimmy Williams, Flint Energies VP of Member Solutions Rogee Roberson, James Erdmanczyk, Jim Taylor, and Walton and Becky Wood.

Commissioner Robinson gave the invocation.

Capt. Randy Pence, USAF led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and briefed the Board on his 12 years of military service. From a small town near Cleveland, OH Capt. Pence joined the Air Force in 2006 as a med tech and was commissioned through the Air Force Academy in 2013. He spent time in Japan and Korea and for the last year serves at Robins AFB as a career broadening officer. One of the most memorable times in his career was providing support on a humanitarian mission in the aftermath of the Nepal earthquake of 2015. He has found the middle Georgia community very military friendly during his time here.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the meeting of October 2, 2018.

Chairman Stalnaker asked for a motion to add two items to the agenda. Item #8 for the emergency purchase of a vehicle for the Public Defender's Office; and Item #9 concerning the resolution accepting a portion of old SR 96, old Hawkinsville Road, Ammons Road and Thompson Mill Road as part of the County road inventory due to the new alignment of SR 96, to set speed limits and to authorize staff to assign the appropriate address numbers for the new section of highway.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to add Items #8 and #9 to the agenda.

Director of Administration Barry Holland conducted a second reading of an Alcohol License for Belchere Holdings, LLC for the on-premise sale of beer and wine in a restaurant setting.

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

Jennifer Belcher representing Belchere Holdings, LLC was present with nothing further to add.

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There was no opposition.

There being no comments Chairman Stalnaker closed the public hearing and reopened the regular meeting.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve the Alcohol License Application for the on-premise sale of beer and wine submitted by Jennifer Belcher representing Belchere Holdings, LLC.

Mr. Walker presented a request from the City of Warner Robins for a master water meter connection to the County's Water System in order to serve a proposed commercial development at 794 GA Highway 96. Public Works staff has reviewed the request and recommends approval.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve a request from the City of Warner Robins for a master water meter connection to the Houston County Water System to serve the proposed commercial development at 794 GA Highway 96 to be installed on the east side of South Houston Lake Road.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to table both Items #3 and #4. These items will be reconsidered at the November 6, 2018 meeting.

Mr. Thomson presented a request from Sheriff Talton for the disbursement of the \$450 allotted clothing allowance for eligible individuals in the department. This is a budgeted FY19 expense.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the disbursement of a \$450.00 clothing allowance to those twenty-seven Sheriff's Department personnel identified in a letter from Sheriff Talton dated October 3, 2018. Total disbursement is \$12,150.

Ms. Robinson presented the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant for the Solicitor-General's office. The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) has approved the continuation.

These funds, that will allow for the continuance of the Victim Assistance Program in the State Court, will be funneled through the Prosecuting Attorney's Council of Georgia (PAC) and are as follows:

Solicitor-General for \$137,284 of which \$109,827 is federal funds and \$27,457 are match funds.

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Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to authorize Chairman Stalnaker signing all documents necessary to accept \$137,284 of federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant funds to be administered by the Solicitor-General for the continuance of 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 in the amount of \$1,061,094.61.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for the emergency purchase of a vehicle for the Public Defenders Office. The vehicle will be replacing a 2005 Ford 500-SE that due to a recent steering malfunction has been deemed not safe to drive. Purchasing, which was in the process of bidding out a replacement vehicle for one of the Public Defender's investigators, has received prices and Wade Ford has a new Ford Explorer in stock that will fit our needs at a cost of \$25,228. Staff recommends purchase of this vehicle for which \$30,000 was originally budgeted.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve the purchase of one new 2019 Ford Explorer for use in the Public Defender's Office from Wade Ford of Smyrna, GA at a unit cost of \$25,228. SPLOST 2018 will fund this purchase.

Ms. Robinson presented a resolution accepting that portion of old SR 96, Old Hawkinsville Road, Ammons Road and Thompson Mill Road as part of the Houston County road inventory. The County will also need to set speed limits and assign appropriate addresses.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to authorize the Board of Commissioners signing the resolution accepting that portion of old SR 96, Old Hawkinsville Road, Ammons Road, and Thompson Mill Road as part of the Houston County road inventory due to the construction of the new realignment of State Route 96 / Old Hawkinsville Road between the area of Old Perry Road and Thompson Mill Road; to set the speed limits on those affected roads as indicated in a memorandum from Traffic Engineer Ken Robinson dated September 5, 2018; and to authorize county staff to assign appropriate street numbers for the new section of SR 96.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that the new house numbers would be assigned by County staff by the end of the week and that each affected residence would be notified along with the Postmaster.

Chairman Stalnaker then closed the meeting and opened public comments.

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Jim Taylor, Warner Robins Building Supply Business Development & Marketing Manager, remarked that there appears to be no rate hikes for building materials in the aftermath of Hurricane Michael due to the tariffs and stockpiles of building materials inventory. He also commented on the apparent lack of storm shelters in the community and suggested the possibility of utilizing the Guardian Center facility as a shelter in the future.

Walton Wood, 426 Sandefur Road, Kathleen, GA thanked all first responders, law enforcement, Flint Electric and County staff for their efforts during and after the hurricane.

Chairman Stalnaker also thanked all first responders including law enforcement, Fire Department, HEMA, Public Works and EMS for their efforts during the hurricane and thought that a formal ceremony in the near future acknowledging everyone's efforts would be fitting.

Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar gave the Board an executive summary of the Public Works staff efforts including removing trees from roadways, removing debris from the County's rights of way and, the final phase, picking up yard waste and debris for unincorporated citizens. He related that there were 128 recorded incidents of trees and other large debris in the County's rights of way as compared to last years' Irma recorded incidents of 187. The only County road that remains impassable as of today is Pitts Road in the South end of the County due to a washed-out culvert. County crews are in the process of having materials delivered to the site so that repairs can be made.

Chief Williams summarized his department's efforts having answered 204 dispatch calls with approximately 25 houses with noted damage. He praised the teamwork of all agencies and departments involved as well as the public utilities and private citizens. He addressed the sheltering situation in Houston County stating that the County is not included in the State of Georgia's sheltering plan but that they do work in conjunction with the Red Cross on local shelters when deemed necessary. The State's sheltering plan designates Macon, Columbus and Augusta. There are Good Samaritan shelters, for example at local churches, that may open but those organizations take on all the requisite responsibilities and liabilities. He mentioned that the County did deploy nearly 1,000 cots during and after the hurricane.

Rogee Roberson, Flint Energies VP of Member Solutions, stated that Flint recorded some 519 outages which affected approximately 20,000 customers in parts of 16 of 17 counties that they serve including Houston. He praised the relationship that Flint enjoys with everyone during these weather incidents.

There being no further public comments, Chairman Stalnaker closed the public comments and reopened the regular meeting.

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Chairman Stalnaker then opened the meeting for commissioners' comments.

Chairman Stalnaker briefed the Board on the necessity of purchasing back-up generators at each of our water treatment plants that do not currently have them in place. The recent hurricane has underscored the need to have these generators to keep the treatment plants in operation during such times.

Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar is actively obtaining quotes and will have them on a November agenda for the Board's consideration. Mr. Dunbar thought that it will take approximately \$1 million to accomplish the task.

Chairman Stalnaker then reminded everyone that early voting began Monday, October 15th at the Board of Elections office in Perry and will be there all week Monday thru Friday during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and during the following two weeks also with Saturday voting on October 27th from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Additional locations for early voting will be open beginning Monday, October 22nd at the Houston Health Pavilion Cary W. Martin Conference Center on Houston Road and at the Central Georgia Technical College Roy H. "Sonny" Watson Health Sciences Building at 71 Cohen Walker Drive.

Chairman Stalnaker also advised the Board that staff will be bringing drafts of a new Social Media policy as well as a Device Usage policy to include County -owned desk phones, cell phones, tablets, laptops and desktop computers to the Board for their consideration at the November 6th Board meeting.

Chairman Stalnaker asked Chief Williams to touch on the subject of our recently upgraded ISO rating for the Fire Department.

Chief Williams stated that the Fire Department's ISO rating had improved to a 4 / 4X effective October 1, 2018 and that each individual homeowner should contact their insurance carrier to see if there would be any potential savings on their homeowner's policy.

Lastly, Chairman Stalnaker briefed the Board on a Landfill compactor that had caught fire and been destroyed on Monday. The equipment will have to be replaced as it is only one of two that are in operation at the County's landfill. A replacement machine is thought to be around \$750,000 and will have to be purchased utilizing available Solid Waste Reserve Funds.

Mr. Walker thanked all County employees for their exemplary service during the storm. He also thanked our partners with Flint Electric and Georgia Power.

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Mr. McMichael thanked Chief Williams for the three weather briefings that he hosted during the storm.

Mr. Thomson thanked everyone involved with the storm's preparation and aftermath clean-up.

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

Barry Holland
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner