

**Houston County Commissioners Meeting
September 15, 2020
Warner Robins, Georgia**

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday September 15, 2020, at the Houston County Annex in Warner Robins, Georgia, with Chairman Stalnaker presiding and Commissioners Walker, Thomson, McMichael, and Robinson 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 Chris Stoner, Landfill Superintendent Terry Dietsch, Solid Waste Collections Manager Janet Marcella, Jeanne Moyer and Josh Raugh of Advanced Disposal Services, and Walton and Becky Wood.

Commissioner Robinson gave the Invocation and then led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the meeting of September 1, 2020.

Mr. Walker presented a request from Director of Personnel Ken Carter to fill the soon to be vacant Personnel Office Assistant position in Personnel.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve hiring Grace Lee for the soon to be vacant Personnel Office Assistant position in the Personnel Department at a Grade 8-C effective September 22, 2020.

Mr. Thomson presented a request for approval of a bid for one new roll-off refuse truck for use in the Landfill.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of one 2021 Mack Granite GR64B roll-off truck for use in the Landfill from Worldwide Equipment of Albany, GA for a total of \$144,626.35 which includes an 84-month extended warranty on the engine and drive train. This vehicle is funded by Solid Waste capital funds.

Mr. Thomson presented a request for approval of a bid for the installation of 16" gate valves near the intersection of Bear Branch Road and SR 247.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of the water system improvements for 16" gate valve cut-ins at Frito Lay and Middle Georgia CoGen to Pyles Plumbing & Utility Contractors, Inc. of Macon in the amount of \$74,300. Water Department capital funds will pay for these improvements.

Mr. McMichael presented a request for approval of a change order on the Elko Road Water Line Extension project.

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Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to authorize Chairman Stalnaker signing Change Order #1 with Low Tide Piping, LLC of Wrightsville, GA increasing the original contract price of \$462,703.58 by \$105,181.81 for a new contract total of \$567,885.39. There is no increase in contract time. Water Department capital improvement funds will pay for this increase in the project.

Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar explained that the current Elko water system has been plagued for years with complaints of low pressures that average around 35 psi. After the tie-in with the Haynesville system the pressures will be much higher around 90 psi. Originally the design of this project included only pressure reducing valves at each home to make sure that they were not overwhelmed with higher pressures. This change order will add a pressure reducing valve and associated piping to the system overall to protect the older Elko system from the higher pressure of the Haynesville system.

Mr. McMichael presented a request for approval of a bid to purchase and install equipment at the new Fire HQ and HEMA building.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of one 80KW 120/208 VAC diesel generator and one GTS 400-amp switch to be installed at the Houston County Fire HQ and Emergency Management Complex to Anderson Power Services of Fort Valley, GA in the amount of \$43,291.49 plus \$1,300 for the yearly maintenance contract.

Ms. Robinson presented a request from Director of Purchasing Mark Baker for approval to declare items as surplus and to set the public auction date.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the declaration of vehicles and miscellaneous equipment as outlined in a memorandum from Director of Purchasing Mark Baker dated September 9, 2020 as surplus to the County's needs and to set the public auction date for 10:00 a.m. October 1, 2020 to be conducted by the Purchasing Department at the County warehouse facility.

Motion by Ms. Robinson second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$2,148,455.78.

Chairman Stalnaker then recognized Landfill Superintendent Terry Dietsch and Solid Waste Collections Manager Janet Marcella who briefed the Board on a proposed Solid Waste Ordinance Amendment.

Mr. Dietsch explained the problem with non-compliant piles of refuse that our contractor, Advanced Disposal Systems, is not required to pick up under their contract. The piles sit for weeks at a time which disturbs the neighbors and the County ultimately must pick it up themselves to resolve the situation if the homeowner does not comply. This proposed amendment would allow the County to impose a fee in the future if the County must ultimately pick up those non-compliant piles.

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Ms. Marcella then showed the Board pictures of different non-compliant piles that are the root of this problem.

Mr. Dietsch stated that the proposed amendment offers a solution to the problem that will begin with the education of the residents, the contractor tagging non-compliant piles so that the owner could rectify the situation, a letter with a non-compliance warning notice if necessary, and finally imposing a \$125 fee if not rectified by the homeowner. The \$125 fee was arrived at considering that it costs approximately \$75 per hour to run the grapple truck plus the cost to cover the County employees time and the tipping fees at the landfill itself. If the resident fails to pay the fine, then the water

and/or garbage service would be cut-off. The last resort would then be code enforcement and court action. Ultimately, however, our goal is simply compliance.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that once water service is cut-off and the garbage container has been picked up at a non-compliant residence, the customer must pay the entire bill to receive services once again. A partial payment on just the water service or just the garbage service will not suffice.

After the presentation, Chairman Stalnaker received a consensus of support for the amendment as drafted from the other Board members. He asked Mr. Hall to proceed with the appropriate advertising. Two readings of the proposed amendment will occur during the regular Board meetings of October 6th at 9:00 a.m. in Perry and the October 20th meeting at 5:00 p.m. in Warner Robins before the Board could vote. Chairman Stalnaker thanked Mr. and Mrs. Wood for serving on the citizens advisory board and asked if either had any comment.

Mr. Wood stated that it was time that the Commissioners took this action to rectify this problem.

Chairman Stalnaker thanked Mr. Dietsch and Ms. Marcella for their efforts.

Jeanne Moyer, Operations Manager with Advanced Disposal Systems, remarked that she appreciated the efforts and felt that such an amendment would make a difference.

Mr. Dietsch thanked the Board for approving the purchase of the new replacement roll-off truck for the Landfill.

The Chairman remarked that there is another piece of equipment, a dozer to replace a 25-year old machine, that is being bid by the Purchasing Department right now.

Mr. Baker stated that a bid recommendation would be coming to the Board at their October 6th meeting for that dozer.

Chairman Stalnaker closed the regular portion of the meeting and opened Public Comments.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Mr. and Mrs. Wood.

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Becky Wood, 426 Sandefur Road, Kathleen commented that she appreciated the efforts of Mr. Dietsch, Ms. Marcella, Advanced Disposal and the rest of their respective staff managing the County's solid waste.

Chief Stoner reminded everyone of the grand opening ceremony for the new Lake Joy Road Fire Station #5 and HEMA HQ building which is open to the public on Saturday, September 26th beginning at 10:00 a.m. The fire station is already manned, and he stated that staff would be moving into the EMA building during the two weeks or so after the grand opening ceremony. That building is hardened to FEMA standards to withstand hurricane force winds. Chief Stoner also thanked the Board for approving the generator purchase for this site earlier in the meeting. He also briefed the Board on the pending weather due to hurricane Sally. No severe effects are expected other than the potential for two to four inches of rain Wednesday thru Friday with the potential for heavier amounts locally, and a very small potential for a tornado late night Wednesday.

There being no further comments Chairman Stalnaker closed the Public Comments portion of the meeting and reopened the regular meeting.

Chairman Stalnaker then closed the regular portion of the meeting and opened Commissioners Comments

Chairman Stalnaker reminded everyone once again of the importance of completing the 2020 Census and that the current deadline was September 30th. Although Houston County is ranked 15th best of 159 counties and has a response rate of 68.7% the State of Georgia ranks low as compared to the nation. There is a very great potential that we could lose both representation and funding if our participation rate does not improve. He commended Jake Cox and others for the job they have done promoting the census and its importance to our community. He also encouraged everyone to vote in support of Amendment #1 on election day. Amendment #1 authorizes the Georgia legislature to dedicate tax or fee revenue to the public purpose for which the taxes or fees were imposed. Specifically, he is concerned with the State of Georgia's history of diverting hazardous waste and landfill clean-up trust funds from their intended purpose of cleaning up tire dumps, landfills and hazardous waste sites. The state has for years been redirecting most of those funds generated by the fees to their General Fund to fill holes in the State's budget caused by other shortfalls in revenue. This amendment would stop that from happening. Landfill Superintendent Terry Dietsch added that for every ton that goes into the landfill the County pays 75 cents into the trust fund. Those fees should be used for their intended purpose. Chairman Stalnaker announced that the next regularly scheduled Board meeting would be in the Boardroom at the Perry courthouse on Tuesday, October 6th at 9:00 a.m. Lastly, he asked everyone to keep Mr. McMichael in their thoughts and prayers after the recent passing of his wife Dianne.

Mr. Walker stated that Dianne was a wonderful lady who could always be counted on.

Ms. Robinson remarked that Dianne will be missed, and that she was thinking of Tom and the family.

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Mr. Thomson remarked that Dianne was a great, soft-spoken lady who will be missed.

Mr. McMichael thanked everyone for their thoughts and prayers.

There being no further comments Chairman Stalnaker closed the Commissioners Comments portion of the 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

