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**Houston County Commissioners Meeting**

**March 17, 2015**

**Warner Robins, Georgia**

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 17, 2015 at the Houston County Annex in Warner Robins, Georgia with Chairman Stalnaker presiding and Commissioners McMichael, Walker, Thomson and Robinson present. Also present were Director of Administration Barry Holland, Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar, Human Resource Director Ken Carter, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Purchasing Director Mark Baker, Walton Wood and County Attorney Tom Hall.

Commissioner Walker led the audience in the Invocation.

Rodney McColligan, former US Marine Corporal, led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and then detailed his military career. He served three years in the Marines including a tour of duty in Vietnam in 1971. During his Vietnam tour he had varying duties including patrolling and protecting local villages from the Viet Cong. During his tour he contracted an extremely bad case of ringworm and jungle rot and had to be airlifted for treatment. He separated from the Marines and then, after spending 18 months as a civilian, joined the Army. He has resided in Houston County for seven years.

Chairman Stalnaker presented a proclamation to Melanie Griffin, Chairman of the local Utility Coordinating Committee and Director of Region 3 with the Georgia Utility Coordinating Committee, recognizing April as ‘Safe Digging Month’ in Houston County. He explained that Georgia 811, or ‘Call before you dig’, is a communication center designed to help protect contractors, landscapers, and do-it-yourselfers from hitting underground utility lines while working on large or small excavation or digging projects. Getting underground utility lines marked before you dig prevents personal injuries, costly repairs to utilities and potential service disruptions to neighborhoods.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of March 3, 2015.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously to approve the termination of the Water Supply Agreement with Mid-Georgia CoGen, LP, dated April 24, 1996 and to send the 6-month notice to Mid-Georgia CoGen, LP as required by the agreement.

Chairman Stalnaker asked Robbie Dunbar to make sure that the rate was changed in six months.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously to approve Chairman Stalnaker to sign the Superior Court employment contracts for court reporters Wendy Nelson, Connie Montgomery, and Angela Busch for a one-year term ending March 9, 2016.

Chairman Stalnaker noted that there is no change in the terms of the contracts from the previous year.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously to approve an amount of bad instrument (check) charge for all Houston County Departments as set out in O.C.G.A. § 16-9-20(j), which is $30 or 5% of the face amount of the instrument, whichever is greater, plus any fee charged to the County by its bank.

Chairman Stalnaker clarified that the current fee was $25.00

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Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously to approve Chairman Stalnaker to sign Change Order #3 on the Feagin Mill Road Phase 2 widening project with Georgia Asphalt increasing the previously amended contract price of $3,567,258.07 by $55,445.80 for a total contract price of $3,622,703.87. The previously amended contract time of 751 days will increase by 30 days to 781 calendar days.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that this was a SPLOST project.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously to approve award of the 2015 Spot Asphalt Overlay project to Womack Paving of Gray, GA in the amount of $81,337.70.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that this was also a SPLOST project.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously to approve award of the White Road Overlay project to Womack Paving of Gray, GA in the amount of $150,327.25. The City of Byron will reimburse the County $25,000 for their portion of the contract.

Chairman Stalnaker explained that the City of Byron is contributing $25,000 because they had annexed a portion of White Road in Houston County. This project adds to an ongoing SPLOST construction project.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously to approve the payment of bills totaling $1,399,740.91.

Mr. McMichael asked that the check for Vendor #032178 ($225.75) be held for further clarification.

Chairman Stalnaker then opened the meeting for public comments.

Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar briefed the Board on two new service agreements pertaining to the water system that will come before them at the April 7th meeting. Paymentus Corp. would handle all call-in credit card payments that our water clerks now handle. Arista Information Systems would handle all on-line payments through computer or mobile devices. Each service would charge a $1.95 per transaction for processing the payment. The County would receive only the amount of the bill and the vendors would collect the $1.95 transaction fee. Of course utility customers may still pay by mail or in person at the Water Department. Both services could be in operation within a six week timeframe after Board approval. These services will be a huge convenience for many customers especially military service members who may be deployed elsewhere and have a need to pay their utility bill.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that both the Water Department staff and utility customers are excited about both of these new services. Approximately 40% of customers commonly utilize credit card or on-line payment options.

There being no further public comments, the meeting was continued.

The Chairman then asked for comments from the Commissioners.

Ms. Robinson reflected on the loss of Ms. Lucile Hammock.

Mr. Walker mentioned that there is a 211 service similar to the 811 service that connects people with local services such as disaster assistance, housing, crisis counseling, etc.

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Chairman Stalnaker briefed the Board on the upcoming FY16 budget process. He stated that budget request sheets would go out to department heads and elected officials on April 1st and would be due back to the Commissioner’s office by April 24th. A public hearing will be held on the proposed FY16 budget on June 16th at 6:00 p.m. in Warner Robins in conjunction with the regularly scheduled Board meeting. A special called meeting will be held on June 23rd at 5:00 p.m. in Warner Robins for the purpose of adopting the new budget. He thanked all departments for their past efforts but explained that this coming year will be an extremely tough challenge since revenues overall have been lagging and the digest has not been growing at a rate we once enjoyed. Expenses have been hard to contain and we will have to live within our means. He explained the importance of the digest given that approximately 77% of our General Fund revenues come from property taxes.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously to enter into Executive Session for Attorney/Client matters as allowed by O.C.G.A. § 50-14-2(1).

Upon returning, Chairman Stalnaker reconvened the regular Board meeting with no action taken.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

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Barry Holland Chairman

Director of Administration

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Commissioner

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Commissioner