

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
May 17, 2016
Warner Robins, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 17, 2016 at the Houston County Annex building in Warner Robins, Georgia with Chairman Stalnaker presiding and Commissioners Walker, McMichael, Thomson and Robinson present. Also present were Director of Administration Barry Holland, County Attorney Tom Hall, Personnel Director Ken Carter, Purchasing Director Mark Baker, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Fire/HEMA Chief Jimmy Williams, District Attorney George Hartwig, Ryan English, Flint Energies Senior VP Jimmy Autry, James Erdmanczyk, and Ansel Peck.

Commissioner Robinson led the audience in the Invocation.

Col. John Harvey Klein, US Army (Ret.) led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and detailed his military career. After completing ROTC training and graduating college he was commissioned as an officer in the Army where he began service in the Army Signal Corp. He served at such places as Fort Benning, Fort Gordon, Virginia, Florida and Puerto Rico. Later during his service, he was sent for seminary training and served in the Army Reserves as a chaplain. Col. Klein's two grown sons accompanied him to the Board meeting. His oldest son is a flight surgeon and his other son is an aerospace engineer. He spoke of the sacrifices endured by not only the military service member but of their family as well. He commended his wife of many years for her unwavering support during his service.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes of the May 3, 2016 Board of Commissioners meeting.

Chairman Stalnaker asked for a motion to add an item to the agenda concerning surplus vehicles and equipment.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to add the declaration of vehicles and equipment surplus to the County's needs and to set the public auction date to the agenda as Item 7A.

Mr. Walker presented a request from District Attorney George Hartwig to hire Mr. Ryan English for a soon to be vacated position of Assistant District Attorney at a Grade 27-C. Mr. English does have the requisite experience to qualify for the C-step.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve the hire of Ryan English as an Assistant District Attorney at Grade 27-C effective on or after May 31, 2016.

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Mr. Walker presented a request for appointments to the Phoenix Center Community Service Board. The first is a reappointment of Sharon Hansen and the second an appointment of Gail Robinson.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve the reappointment of Sharon Hansen to another three-year term on the Phoenix Center Community Service Board beginning July 1, 2016 and ending June 30, 2019.

Motion made in unison with Ms. Robinson abstaining to approve the appointment of Commissioner Robinson to the Phoenix Center Community Service Board for a one-year term beginning July 1, 2016 and ending June 30, 2017.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews gave the Board an update on existing mobile home hardships. He presented a report on twenty-one hardships that were applied for over the course of the last ten years and explained that fourteen of these were verified as still being active. The other seven having either been withdrawn, denied or the mobile homes had been removed. Each property was visited physically to determine whether the mobile homes were still present.

Mr. McMichael indicated that a follow-up should be conducted with each individual applicant.

Chairman Stalnaker stated that Mr. Andrews would need some type of direction from the Board on how he should proceed and asked for a recommendation from Mr. Andrews concerning these procedures.

Mr. Thomson asked if each applicant should be required to reapply on an annual basis.

Mr. Andrews felt that an updated doctor's letter might suffice in order to verify the continued hardship.

Chairman Stalnaker asked if it would be better handled as a stipulation placed on each approval or if there should be a change in the ordinance or regulation.

County Attorney Tom Hall indicated that a stipulation would suffice.

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Chairman Stalnaker asked Mr. Andrews for an update concerning two specific properties that had come to the Boards attention. One of these properties is an abandoned house under construction on Tidwell Road and another being a dilapidated mobile home on Crestview Drive.

Mr. Andrews explained that the owner of the Tidwell Road home had been cited, taken to court, and heavily fined but still has not taken action to finish the home. Mr. Andrews indicated that he was continuing to work with Deputy Shay Little to try and resolve this problem. As for the other property, contact had been made with the owner and he has boarded up the broken windows, mowed the grass and placed the debris in the right of way.

Chairman Stalnaker felt that, in general, the public expects the government to handle these issues and that he is in favor of the property owner being responsible for the cleanup rather than the government. He asked Mr. Andrews for another update on these properties in one months' time.

Mr. Thomson presented a request from the Fire Department to approve their annual "Family Portrait Fundraiser" for 2016 beginning June 1, 2016 and ending mid-November. They propose to use Fire and Rescue Support Team (FIRST) to conduct the door to door sales and Curtis Photography to take the pictures. County Attorney Tom Hall has reviewed both contracts and upon approval of the Board, Chief Williams will sign both contracts.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the Fire Department's proposed 2016 Family Portrait Fundraiser to be held between June 1st and the second week of November. Chief Williams is authorized to sign contracts with both FIRST and Curtis Photography.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for the purchase and installation of audio/visual equipment for the Boardroom in the Annex building in Warner Robins and the Boardroom at the Courthouse building in Perry.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve the purchase and installation of audio visual equipment at the Annex Building Boardroom in the amount of \$11,016.54; and at the Courthouse Boardroom in the amount of \$5,730.77, from Fusion Point of Macon. Funds are budgeted in FY16 Executive budget (Department #1300).

Mr. McMichael presented a request form the Water Department for approval of a proposal from Burnett Lime Company to install a CalFlo lime slurry system at the Woodard Road treatment plant. This system would replace the existing powder lime feed system. The proposed plans, specs and acquisition cost have been reviewed by our consultant Carter & Sloope as well as County staff and are in line with the previous installations at six of our other treatment plants.

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Motion by Mr. Michael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve the acquisition of a CalFlo Lime Slurry System for the Woodard Road water treatment plant from Burnett Lime Company, Inc. of Campobello, SC, for \$184,600. Funds are budgeted in the FY16 Water Department capital improvements.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills in the amount of \$862,193.30.

Mr. Walker presented a list of equipment and vehicles, submitted by Purchasing Director Mark Baker, that have been deemed surplus to the County's needs. Approval is requested to declare these items as surplus and to set the public auction date for Thursday, June 2, 2016 at 10:00 am at the Purchasing Department Warehouse.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve the declaration of vehicles and miscellaneous equipment surplus to the County's needs and to set the public auction date for 10:00 am June 2, 2016 to be conducted by the Purchasing Department at the county warehouse facility.

Chairman Stalnaker presented an update on the FY17 budget stating that it will probably be the toughest budget year in the last five years. Revenues are flat and for the General Fund are actually around \$270,000 less than FY16. Although the tax digest is anticipated to grow by 1.25%, there are losses to revenues due to revaluations, TAVT, new tax penalty law changes, and other factors. He reminded everyone that over 70% of the County's General Fund revenues are derived from real and personal property taxes. Departments have requested \$55,769,415 and since projected General Fund revenues are only \$53,703,021 there is a deficit of \$2,066,394 that will have to be cut in order to balance the budget. It is not unusual to be that far out at the beginning of the budget process. He related that most departments were conservative with their requests and that the budget would be balanced by the time the County holds its public hearing on June 21st. Although there is a need for additional positions, the budget will not be able to fund any new full-time positions or reclassifications. The one exception to additional positions will be the staffing of the new fire station currently under construction since these positions would be covered by the existing 1.18 mills fire tax and not by the General Fund. Chairman Stalnaker stated that the budget would be balanced without any tax increase and therefore expects the millage rate will remain at its current level of 9.95 mills. Each of the Commissioners expressed their agreement and desire to keep the tax rate the same with no increase. Chairman Stalnaker reiterated that the public hearing on the proposed FY17 budget will be held during the June 21st Board meeting and then a special-called public meeting would be held on June 28th at 11:00 am in the Commissioners Board Room of the Houston County Annex building in Warner Robins to formally adopt the budget.

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Chairman Stalnaker invited everyone to join Middle Georgia Orthopaedics and the Rolling Thunder Chapter for a POW/MIA Chair of Honor dedication and flag raising ceremony at 3051 Watson Boulevard, Warner Robins on June 2nd at 6:00 pm. The doctors and staff of Middle Georgia Orthopaedics and the Rolling Thunder Chapter will honor all veterans, active duty, current and former POW/MIA along with their family members.

Chairman Stalnaker then opened the meeting for public comments.

Jimmy Autry, 207 William B. Evans Court, Kathleen invited the Board and the public to an open house for the new Flint Energies headquarters building in Reynolds to be held Sunday, May 22nd from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

Mr. James Erdmanczyk, 123 S. 3rd Street, Apartment 9, Warner Robins inquired as to when the extension of Armed Forces Blvd. would be completed; and also about the construction of the new veterans' education center. Chairman Stalnaker referred Mr. Erdmanczyk to Warner Robins Mayor Toms as he would be better situated to answer.

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

Barry Holland
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

