

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
August 21, 2012
Warner Robins, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 21, 2012 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, Director of Personnel Ken Carter, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Senior Animal Control Officer Dale Newberry, Purchasing Agent Mark Baker, Community Planner Jake Cox, Becky Wood, Warner Robins Councilman Paul Shealy, Warner Robins Councilman Mike Daley, General James Sehorn, Elections Superintendent JoAnn Shipes, Board of Elections Chairman R.A. (Tony) Robbins, Board of Elections Vice Chairman Barbara Waddle, Board of Elections member Richard Nadler, Board of Elections member Vivian Childs and County Attorney Tom Hall.

Commissioner Robinson led the audience in the Invocation.

Mr. James Sehorn, retired Brigadier General United States Air Force, shared his experiences in a very moving speech recalling his five years and three months spent as a prisoner of war at the infamous 'Hanoi Hilton' during the Vietnam War. Mr. Sehorn was flying a combat mission with the 469th Tactical Fighter Squadron in 1967 when he was shot down over North Vietnam. He called his experience both the best tour he had ever served and the one he would least like to repeat. He recounted a story of a fellow prisoner of war who had sewn a small flag on the inside of his prison shirt with thread pulled from blankets using a needle fashioned from a piece of bamboo.

Chairman Stalnaker read and presented a resolution of appreciation to Ms. Betty Gocken for her 29 years of service on the Houston County Board of Elections.

Chairman Stalnaker read and presented a resolution recognizing the Warner Robins American Little League (WRALL) as the 2012 State Champions. Each team member, the team mother, and all three coaches were presented with a County seal lapel pin and a t-shirt commemorating their accomplishment.

Motion by Mr. McMichael second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of August 7, 2012.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously to object to a request from the City of Warner Robins to annex various properties as outlined in an annexation notice dated July 23, 2012 pending clarification on several parcels that appear not be 'unincorporated islands' as indicated.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously to authorize Chairman Stalnaker to sign a ten year Mutual Aid Agreement in Fire and Police protection between Houston County and the City of Centerville.

Ms. Robinson presented a second reading of an amendment to the Houston County Unified Animal Control Ordinance.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously to approve an amendment to the Houston County Unified Animal Control Ordinance deleting Chapter 10, Article III, 'Dangerous Dog Control' in its entirety and substituting a new Chapter 10, Article III, 'Responsible Dog Ownership'.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously to authorize Chairman Stalnaker to sign Contract Change Order #5 for the Corder Road Widening project. The increase due to this Change Order is \$424,594.36 making the contract price with Georgia Asphalt, Inc. \$4,208,882.99 with no change to the contract time of 835 calendar days.

County Attorney Tom Hall presented an abandonment of a portion of Cane Mill Road, which Mr. Hall indicated has ceased to be used by the public to the extent that no substantial public purpose is served by it. Mr. Walker remarked that this portion of the road amounts to little more than a 'farm road'.

Chairman Stalnaker then opened a public hearing on the abandonment of the portion of Cane Mill Road running between U.S. Hwy. 41 and Whitfield Rd.

There being no public comments, the hearing was closed.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously to authorize Chairman Stalnaker to sign a Quit Claim Deed abandoning the portion of Cane Mill Road running between U.S. Hwy. 41 and Whitfield Rd.

County Attorney Tom Hall presented an abandonment of a portion of Story Street and indicated that it is no longer needed due to the realignment of Nelson Road. Mr. Walker remarked that the adjoining property owner has plans to improve that area via landscaping.

Chairman Stalnaker then opened a public hearing on the abandonment of a portion of Story Street.

Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar indicated that Houston County initiated this abandonment and that the realignment was done to improve the road for the safety of the driving public and also for maintenance purposes. No one spoke in opposition.

There being no further public comments, the hearing was closed.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously to authorize Chairman Stalnaker to sign a Quit Claim Deed abandoning the portion of Story Street described as follows:

All that tract or parcel of land situate, lying and being in Land Lots 146 and 141 of the 5th Land District of Houston County, Georgia, being known and designated as the right of way for that portion of Story Street lying between Corder Road and Nelson Drive, as shown on a survey of addition No. 1 of Godfrey Subdivision of record in Plat Book 4, Page 263, Clerk's Office, Houston Superior Court. Said plat and the recorded copy thereof are incorporated herein by reference thereto for all purposes.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously to award the bid for the Wimberly Road construction project to the design/build team of Reeves Construction & Hulseley-McCormick in the amount of \$212,993.85.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously to approve payment of the bills totaling \$1,685,756.50.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously to authorize Chairman Stalnaker to sign the intergovernmental agreement between Bibb County, Houston County, Peach County and the Central Georgia Joint Development Authority memorializing Bibb, Houston and Peach County's commitment to providing funding for the purposes of eliminating the presence of incompatible or encroaching properties in the noise and crash corridor located in North Houston County and South Bibb County near Robins Air Force Base; and the Central Georgia Joint Development Authority's commitment to functioning as the administrator of the project and manager of all funding for the project.

Chairman Stalnaker presented a resolution setting the Houston County tax levy for 2012 and outlining the county services to be provided by the levy. He explained that the 2012 millage rate for County operations would be 9.95 mills, and the millage rate for the unincorporated fire services would be 1.18 mills. He emphasized that this is the same tax levy as adopted the previous two years. The net digest for 2012 is \$3,763,319,816 an increase of \$33,971,008 from 2011. Despite a \$27 million decline in reassessments, the 2012 digest increased 0.91% (an approximate \$338,011 increase in revenues from taxes). Chairman Stalnaker also indicated that Houston County has one of the lowest millage

rates in Middle Georgia. The millage rate of 9.95 mills is well below the Tax Cap millage of 10.89 mills. He indicated that the County has operated under the Tax Cap limit for over 10 years. He also noted that while most county governments have access to the LOST tax thus reducing their millage, Houston County does not have access to the LOST (the Board of Education does). Since the LOST equals nearly 6 mills in Houston County, our millage of 9.95 mills is exceptional in comparison to surrounding counties, who are equal or higher in millage, including their LOST tax. He thanked the Commissioners, elected officials, county employees for their dedication to serving the citizens, and most of all the taxpayers who actually pay the cost of operating the government.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried in unison to authorize Chairman Stalnaker to sign a resolution setting the Houston County tax levy for 2012 at 23.49 mills in the incorporated areas and 24.67 mills in the unincorporated areas, as hereby specified:

<u>Incorporated</u>		<u>Unincorporated</u>	
9.95 mills	General County Purposes	9.95 mills	General County Purposes
13.34 mills	Educational Purposes	13.34 mills	Educational Purposes
<u>.20 mills</u>	State Levy	.20 mills	State Levy
23.49 mills		<u>1.18 mills</u>	Fire Levy
		24.67 mills	

Chairman Stalnaker then opened the meeting for public comments.

There being no public comments, the meeting was continued.

The Board of Commissioners echoed Chairman Stalnaker's comments regarding the tax levy and thanked him for his leadership.

Chairman Stalnaker thanked Warner Robins Councilmen Mr. Shealy and Mr. Daley for the high level of cooperation exhibited between the city and county, and also for their public service.

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