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 **Houston County Commissioners Meeting**

**June 16, 2015**

 **Warner Robins, Georgia**

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 16, 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, Community Planner Jake Cox, Human Resources Director Ken Carter, HEMA/Fire Chief Jimmy Williams, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Jimmy Autry Senior Vice-President Flint Energies, Walt and Becky Wood and County Attorney Tom Hall.

Commissioner McMichael led the audience in the Invocation.

SGM Reginald Thompson, US Army, (ret.) led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and then detailed his 32-year military career. He grew up in Cleveland, Ohio and joined the Army in 1981 looking for adventure, leadership skills and hoping to receive a higher education. After serving in places such as Georgia, Germany, New Jersey, Virginia, Washington, D.C., South Carolina, North Carolina, Bahrain and the Netherlands, he and his family have retired to our community. Presently he has returned to school to work on his Psychology degree. His wife also served in the military for 21 years and accompanied him to the meeting.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of June 2, 2015.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously to concur with a City of Warner Robins annexation request for all that tract or parcel of land situate, lying and being in Land Lot 156 of the 10th Land District, Houston County, Georgia, being known and designated as a portion of parcel 7-A totaling 27.91 acres, according to a survey prepared by Ocmulgee, Inc. dated 4/16/15 a copy of which is of record in Plat Book 59, Page 89, Clerk’s Office, Houston County Superior Court.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously to approve the acceptance of the Mental Health Accountability Court grant (#J16-8-069) in the amount of $140,376 from the State of Georgia – Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for the purposes of establishing the Mental Health & Veterans Accountability Court. Of that $140,376, Houston County’s required match is $14,038. Chairman Stalnaker is authorized to sign all grant documents. The temporary full-time Mental Health Court Coordinator position will terminate if and when grant funding is discontinued or if funding is reduced to a level at which it can no longer support the position.

Mr. Walker commented that the Phoenix Center will be involved with the operation of the court. Chairman Stalnaker explained that we are one of the last circuits in the state to establish an accountability court.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously to approve Chairman Stalnaker to sign Independent Contractor Agreements with Sherry Herrera Campbell at $45,000 per year, Kameyan Sims at $45,000 per year, and Caralyn J. Huddleston at $20,000 per year to provide for the defense of indigent persons appearing in the Houston County Juvenile Court.

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Each agreement will be effective July 1, 2015 and remain in effect until June 30, 2016. These agreements may be renewed from year to year subject to an annual review of performance conducted by the County in conjunction with the Juvenile Court.

Chairman Stalnaker clarified that these agreements provide for conflict attorneys for the court and that they are renewable on a yearly basis tied to the County’s fiscal year.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously to approve Chairman Stalnaker to sign a film location agreement with Forest Productions, Inc. for the project tentatively titled “Who Do You Think You Are?”. The production company will be granted limited access to the County courthouse and more specifically the Probate Court. Filming will commence on Tuesday June 16, 2015 and end on Wednesday, June 17, 2015.

The first reading of an Amendment to the Water Resources Protection Ordinance was presented by County Attorney Tom Hall. The amendment would add Section 8.8 ‘Residential Stormwater Management Facilities’ which provides guidelines for the proper construction of any stormwater management facility for a new residential subdivision to include a new section or phase of an existing subdivision. Once the County has accepted the subdivision and its improvements, and after the one year maintenance period, the facility will be conveyed to the County. The County will then provide for the proper maintenance and repair of these stromwater management facilities and in return each owner of a lot in the subdivision will pay up to $10 per month (which will be included on their County utility bill.)

The amendment will also alter Section 3.2.1 of the Stormwater Local Design Manual as it relates to Stormwater Management Facilities. It will change the required fencing from a “standard four” to a “vinyl-coated six” foot chain link fence to be constructed around a detention pond.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that many governments have implemented stormwater fees because the ponds are often not properly maintained. He further explained that the Public Works staff will develop a metric that will calculate the actual monthly fee (up to a max of $10 per month) that would be added to the utility bill. He stressed that this measure is not intended to be a universal stormwater fee for each resident of the unincorporated area of the County but rather for those homeowners within a development that would directly benefit. The funds collected would be dedicated to pond management only. He also mentioned that there may possibly be a necessary change to the fencing requirements as currently written.

A second reading of this proposed amendment will be held on July 7th after which action may be taken by the Board.

 Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously to approve Chairman Stalnaker to sign an Off-System Safety Projects Memorandum of Understanding with the Georgia Department of Transportation for the installation of signs and striping on various off-system roads in Houston County.

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Chairman Stalnaker thanked the Public Works staff for working to secure these funds. He explained how critical road striping is to driver safety and also how expensive both new striping and signage can be.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously to approve Chairman Stalnaker to sign an agreement (#1036) with Traylor Business Services, Inc. (TBS) for personal property audits in FY2016. Audits will only be performed when requested specifically by the Chief Tax Appraiser.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously to approve the following budget adjustment to cover the County’s portion of the renovation project undertaken by Houston Healthcare that will provide a voter precinct and community meeting space at the Houston Healthcare Pavilion:

 Increase Expenditures:

 100-5190-57.2000 Payments to Other Agencies $200,000

 Decrease Expenditures:

 100-1599-57.9000 Other – Contingencies $200,000

Mr. Walker commented that this will provide a large, much more convenient precinct on the North side of town.

Mr. McMichael remarked that it will be centrally located for that side of town and that it will be functional with many different uses for the community in addition to being a voter precinct.

Chairman Stalnaker explained that the space will accommodate up to 500 people and will be accessed from the west side of the facility at what used to be the old Belk’s entrance. He commented that the hospital has invested a lot of money into the facility offering medical services to the community. It is one more vital part of the ongoing re-urbanization and renewal of the Houston Road corridor.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously to approve the award of a bid for gasoline and diesel fuel requirements covering the period beginning July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016 to Mansfield Oil Company of Gainesville, GA at -.0423 and -.0402 OPIS markup for gasoline and diesel fuel, respectively.

Mr. McMichael mentioned that this bid is normally let for a six month period but that this bid would be for an entire year.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously to approve the payment of bills totaling $1,366,678.54.

Chairman Stalnaker then opened a public hearing on the proposed FY16 budget. He related that although current revenues are not increasing, the County is in sound financial shape with no general obligation debt, a healthy 6 month cash reserve and that the proposed budget contains a contingency of over $2.1 million for any unanticipated emergencies should the tax digest return less than anticipated.

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The County will not use any prior year funds to balance the FY16 General Fund budget; however, we will use prior year funds for construction projects at the Perry-Houston County Airport. Initial budget requests indicated that the budget was approximately $700,000 out of balance, which is not uncommon. He briefly explained the lengthy process of how the budget was developed with the Commissioners, elected officials, department heads, administrative staff and employees all working together to achieve a balanced budget.

He then gave a detailed presentation highlighting the General Fund budget, as well as the various enterprise and special revenue funds. The Chairman indicated that the General Fund proposed budget totals $54,653,886 and projects no millage rate increase (remaining at 9.95 mills) for residents. The Fire millage is also projected to remain at the current level of 1.18 mills. The budget does include a three percent cost-of-living adjustment for employees; however, merit and longevity pay increases will remain suspended for all county employees.

Chairman Stalnaker remarked that cost savings realized through excellent budget management by department heads, elected officials and employees was significant in being able to provide the COLA. Although there are many new personnel needs they will have to be deferred for future years consideration.

The budget includes $25,681,154 from SPLOST. Of this $25.7 million, $21,757,030 is projected to come from FY2016 collections and $3,924,124 will come from prior year SPLOST revenue. The total proposed budget is $110,276,207 broken down as $54,653,886 General Fund; $3,845,540 E911 Fund; $1,796,270 Fire District Fund; $25,681,154 SPLOST Fund; $6,297,392 Water Fund; $8,031,965 Solid Waste Fund; $9,285,000 Internal Service Fund; and $685,000 Special Revenue Funds.

Each of the Commissioners expressed their thanks to all involved in the budget process.

Chairman Stalnaker then asked for any public comments on the proposed FY2016 budget.

Mr. Walton Wood, 426 Sandefur Road, Kathleen asked if the SPLOST revenues were based on the original projections or on the actual collections. Chairman Stalnaker responded that the projected revenues were based on the actual collections.

Mr. Paul Brown, 113 Oklahoma Avenue, Warner Robins thanked the Chairman for his detailed explanation of the proposed budget. He inquired about possible sidewalks and crosswalks on certain sections of both Dunbar Road and Elberta Road. Chairman Stalnaker explained that the County does install crosswalks at the appropriate intersections and sidewalks mostly on roads that have undergone recent widening projects.

Mr. James Erdmanczyk, 123 S. 3rd Street, Apartment 9, Warner Robins asked how SPLOST dollars were collected. Chairman Stalnaker explained that the Georgia Department of Revenue collected the funds and transmitted them to the County on a monthly basis where they are then spent on the various approved projects.

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Mr. Ansel Peck, 109 Latham Drive, Warner Robins remarked that the County staff always made itself available to the public and that we were also very lucky to have such a group of dedicated elected officials.

Mr. Walton Wood asked what kind of progress the County was making on the list of approved SPLOST projects. Chairman Stalnaker replied that the County was doing pretty good generally on the project list. Currently we are working on several major projects including wrapping up the base encroachment properties acquisition, the upgrade for the E911 800MHz radio system, and an HVAC overhaul on the Annex and State Court buildings. Although SPLOST collections have not met projections thus far, each of the approved projects will be completed.

Mr. Clyde Lomax, 134 Carterwoods Drive, Warner Robins inquired whether the Commissioners could help in bringing a Costco membership-only warehouse retail shop to Houston County. Chairman Stalnaker explained that although the County’s efforts in that arena would normally be centered on manufacturing type industries, Mr. Holland could follow up with Mr. Lomax after the meeting on that issue.

With no further public comments, Chairman Stalnaker then closed the public hearing and re-opened the regular Board meeting.

The Chairman then asked for comments from the Commissioners.

Chairman Stalnaker reminded everyone that the Board will hold a special called meeting at 5:00 pm on Tuesday, June 23rd in the Commissioner’s Board Room at the Warner Robins Annex building to adopt the FY2016 budget, pay year-end bills and to consider any other year-end matters.

Mr. Walker congratulated everyone involved on a great job putting together the budget. He also stated that he was glad the County could give a 3% COLA for employees and also looked forward to the day that we could reinstate the merit system.

Mr. Thomson thanked the citizens for the pleasure of being able to serve on the Board of Commissioners.

Mr. McMichael remarked that he was proud to be a part of this budget process.

Chairman Stalnaker thanked Mr. Andrews, Mr. Carter and Mr. Cox for their efforts as well.

There being no further comments, the meeting was continued.

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

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Barry Holland Chairman

 Director of Administration \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Commissioner

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