

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR SESSION**

August 17, 2021  
6:30 P.M.

Commissioners Present: Rob Grant, Susan Andrews, Bobby Irions, Becky Langston.  
Commissioner Absent: Andrew Zuerner. Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager;  
Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk. Staff Present by Phone: Russell Britt, County Attorney.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** In the absence of Chairman Zuerner, Vice-Chairman Grant called the Regular Session to order.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** Vice-Chairman Grant led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **MINUTES.** The motion to approve the minutes of the August 3, 2021 Regular Session, the July 26, 2021 Planning Session, and the 11 AM & 6:30 PM Called Sessions of August 10, 2021 was made by Commissioner Langston, seconded by Commissioner Andrews, and passed unanimously.
4. **APPEARANCE OF CITIZENS**
  - A. **John Kamisky: Pickleball.** John Kamisky, citizen, appeared before the Board to request the Board consider funding a quad pickleball court by piggybacking on the Board of Education's proposal regarding tennis courts near the Community Center. He said that pickleball is a popular game, sort of a cross between tennis and ping pong; that by not having such a court, the County will be way behind other counties; and that such a court is estimated to cost about \$70,000, which doesn't include grading, lighting or covering. He indicated that he had emailed information regarding pickleball to the Commissioners, and again asked for their consideration. Vice-Chairman Grant thanked Mr. Kamisky for his comments.
5. **NEW BUSINESS**
  - A. **Taxpayers Bill of Rights Public Hearing III.** Vice-Chairman Grant called the Public Hearing to order and said this was the third and final hearing, as required by law, regarding the notice of intent to increase property taxes. Vice-Chairman Grant said that the County has tentatively adopted a 2021 millage rate which will require an increase in property taxes by 1.68 percent County Wide less West Point and by 0.52 percent in the West Point area; that this tentative increase will result in a millage of 9.38 mills, an increase of 0.155 mills in the County wide less West Point area and without this tentative tax increase, the millage rate will be no more than 9.225 mills; that the proposed tax increase for a home with a fair market value of \$225,000 is approximately \$13.95 and the proposed tax increase for non-homestead property with a fair market value of \$150,000 is approximately \$9.30; that in the West Point area, this tentative increase will result in a millage rate of 5.628 mills, an increase of .029 mills and without this tentative tax increase, the millage rate will be no more than 5.599 mills; that the proposed tax increase for a home with a fair market value of \$175,000 is approximately \$2.03 and the proposed tax increase for non-homestead property with a fair market value of \$100,000 is approximately \$1.16. Vice-Chairman Grant asked if anyone wished to comment on the millage rate. There being none, he closed the Public Hearing.
  - B. **Set Millage Rate for 2021.** Vice-Chairman Grant said that with the third Public Hearing regarding the proposed millage rate having been held, the proposed millage rate for the County is 9.38 and that the School Board millage is 18.26, for a proposed total millage of 27.64, and he asked for a motion. The motion to set the County's millage rate at 9.38 mills, the portion of West Point within the County at 5.628 mills, and to authorize the Tax Commissioner to collect the School Board's millage rate of 18.26 was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Irions, and passed unanimously.
  - C. **First Reading: Application of Kim Tharp for Temporary Special Event Alcohol License for an event at Lake Franklin Event Center, FD Roosevelt State Park.** Vice-Chairman Grant read the specifics of the application, said that this was the first reading, that the applicant meets all qualifications, and that the application has been recommended for approval from the Sheriff, but that recommendations are not required from the Health Department or Community Development for this type of license. Kim Tharp, applicant, appeared before the

Board and said that the Chamber of Commerce was excited to hold the Soil to Soul event on September 11, will feature Chef Jamie Keating who will utilize local farm crops and livestock. Vice-Chairman Grant asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of or in opposition to this application. There being none, he said that the Second Reading will be during the September 7 meeting.

- D. **Appointments: Recreation Board.** Vice-Chairman Grant said that a vacancy exists on the Recreation Board due to the resignation of Brandon Fletcher as the representative for the Pine Mountain Youth Sports Association (YSA); that the Pine Mountain YSA has recommended that Sondra Moss, currently serving in an At-Large position, be appointed as the representative of the Pine Mountain YSA to complete Mr. Fletcher's term; and that Ms. Moss had resigned from the At-Large position in order to take the Pine Mountain YSA position. The motion to appoint Sondra Moss as the representative for the Pine Mountain YSA to complete Mr. Fletcher's term, which expires December 31, 2023, was made by Vice-Chairman Grant, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously.

Regarding the now vacant At-Large position, Commissioner Langston made the motion to appoint Sonja Williamson to complete that term, which also expires December 31, 2023. She then gave a brief overview of Mrs. Williamson's background. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Grant and passed unanimously.

## 6. **COUNTY MANAGER**

- A. **Speed Table Program.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that the Board, during the recent Planning Session, requested that a speed table program be drafted to address requests for such on County maintained paved roads in subdivisions in the unincorporated area of the County; that a program has been drafted using GDOT's speed table guidelines and from programs of about five other counties; that the approximate cost for a rubber speed table, made with recycled material, about 21' long x 22.5' wide x 3" high, is \$10,000 to purchase and install; that an asphalt speed table would cost about \$7,000; and that a series of tables may be needed to provide proper traffic calming in neighborhoods. He then reviewed the program detailing the process which includes receipt of request, evaluation by Public Works, material and installation cost estimate, receipt of petition with signatures at least 80% of property owners on impacted road(s), verification of signatures, approval by the Board, and giving the impacted property owners 120 days in which to make full payment of material and installation costs to County, after which the speed table(s) would be installed. Following discussion, the motion to approve the program was made by Commissioner Irions, seconded by Commissioner Andrews, and passed unanimously. Consensus was that the Board is to review the program in a year to determine if it needs to be revised, continued or discontinued.
- B. **GDOT's 5311 Rural Transportation Program.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that the 5311 rural transportation program is a long-established federally funded program administered by GDOT; that it provides citizens with curb-to-curb travel assistance to and from various points (medical appointments, shopping, jobs, school, recreation, and senior citizens centers) for a nominal fee; that there are no income or age restrictions; that Harris County is one of the 36 counties in the State that does not have such a program; that the program is operated by the Lower Chattahoochee Regional Transit Authority (LCRTA) with assistance from the River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC), and is operated by a third-party provider responsible for hiring and training drivers, accepting calls and scheduling rides, providing insurance, maintaining the vans, preparing reports and meeting all other requirements of such a program; that citizens would call the third-party operator at least 24 hours in advance to schedule trips; that program is on demand with no fixed routes, bus stops, or pick-up times; that the vans are usually shuttle-type vans that accommodate 11-14 people; that service times will be Monday-Friday from 8 AM to 5 PM, except holidays; that the cost to the County would be well under \$50,000 and can be funded by T-SPLOST; that the GDOT application process must be completed by December 2021 and the LCRTA and third-party operator will complete the application to expand the operation into Harris County; that an authorizing resolution is necessary for the LCRTA to file an application with GDOT on behalf of the County; and that if approved by GDOT, the program can be budgeted and begin during early 2023, subject to the availability of vans. Following discussion, the motion to approve the resolution and other necessary documents for the LCRTA to file the application was made by Vice-Chairman Grant, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously.

- C. **Change Order: Mercer Med Community Clinic HVAC System.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that the Board approved, during the June 1 meeting, to spend \$48,000 to replace the roof and \$143,000 to replace the HVAC system, for a total of \$191,000 from SPLOST 2019 funds, to renovate the old library building into a community medical clinic; that the contractor has found the existing duct work has liner panel insulation, which is difficult to clean, and has recommended replacement of the ducts at a cost of \$37,916; and that the amount can come from the County's ARP funds. There was a brief discussion regarding the project's outstanding shortfall of the fund raising committee of \$60,500, as well as use of ARP funds and broadband. Following discussion, the motion to approve the change order, using ARP funds in the amount of \$37,916, was made by Vice-Chairman Grant, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously.
- D. **Project Updates.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, reviewed various projects, as follows:
- (1) UDC/Land Use Codes. On schedule to file application by September 13, first reading on October 20, and second reading on November 2 to be effective November 16.
  - (2) Prison Roof Replacement. Bid specs are being prepared.
  - (3) LMIG 2022. List is being prepared for presentation to the Board at the next meeting for approval to send to GDOT.
  - (4) Vehicles for Community Development, Public Works, Recreation & Vehicle Maintenance. Six trucks and one van have been ordered, with the estimated delivery date of June 2022.
  - (5) Ellerslie Park Development. New Parks Maintenance Tech has been hired for the Park; gates and signs have been ordered; and it's beginning to look like a park.
  - (6) Man O'War Railroad Recreation Trail, Phase IV (aka Rails to Trails). Project is ongoing and should be completed by early December 2021.
  - (7) Renovation of Old Library - Roof & HVAC System. Project is underway; change order for HVAC approved earlier this evening.
  - (8) Impact Fee Study. Project is ongoing with Committee meeting planned for September.
  - (9) SPLOST. Collections for FY 2020-21 were 181.4% above budgeted amount.
  - (10) LOST. Collections for FY 2020-21 were 156.4% above budgeted amount.
  - (11) T-SPLOST. Collections for FY 2020-21 were 149.2% above budgeted amount.
  - (12) Single Family Home Permits. Issued 24 during July.
- E. **ARP Grant Applications.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that plans are to submit an ARP grant application in the amount of \$2.5 million for the Mulberry Grove Elevated Water Tank with a \$250,000 match. Following discussion, the motion to authorize the submission of a grant for \$2.5 million in ARP funds for the Elevated Water Tank at I-85 and SR 315 was made by Vice-Chairman Grant, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously.
- F. **ARP Letter of Support.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that Diverse Power will be submitting an ARP grant application to expand Broadband in the northwest and northeast sections of the County; that a \$250,000 match from the County is being requested as well as a letter of support for the application. Following discussion, the motion to authorize the Letter of Support and the match was made by Vice-Chairman Grant, seconded by Commissioner Andrews, and passed unanimously.
- G. **ARP Project List Discussion.** At the request of Commissioner Langston, a work session will be schedule from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM on Tuesday, September 21, in order to review, discuss and approve the ARP fund projects.

7. **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

A. **IGA with Board of Education for Storage of County Records and Board of Elections Office.** Russell Britt, County Attorney, said that as its contribution to the Mercer Med Community Medical Clinic project, the Board of Education (BOE) has agreed to enter into an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the County for 50 years to lease school property (757 Carver Circle, Hamilton) to the County for records storage, Board of Elections Offices, and a possible voting location; that allocated space has been deemed sufficient by County staff and other County officials; that the BOE approved the agreement during their August 12 meeting; that utilizing the space will allow the consolidation of most County records, to include judicial, elections records and equipment, and allow the Board of Elections more office space; that with the consolidation of the County records, the old building currently being used for such, located on GA Highway 116 behind the 911 Center, will be vacated and offered to the volunteer fire departments for a live-fire exercise or torn down by Public Works; and if approved, the IGA begins September 1. The motion to approve this IGA was made by Vice-Chairman Grant, seconded by Commissioner Irions, and passed unanimously. (Document can be found in "Contracts & Agreements" file as C&A #21-13.)

B. **Third Modification to GEFA Loan 2016030 (Water Meter Project).** Russell Britt, County Attorney, said that the County obtained a GEFA loan for its Water Meter Replacement project with an original completion date of September 2020, which was extended in October 2020 to December 1, 2021; that due to COVID-19 quarantine and limited staffing, the project is running behind schedule; that GEFA is willing to extend the project completion date to May 1, 2022, but a modification to the loan is needed, to include amending documents and an authorizing resolution. The motion to approve the Third Modification, which includes an authorization resolution, to extend the completion date to May 1, 2022, was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously. (Contract document can be found in "Contracts & Agreements" file as C&A #21-14.)

8. **ADJOURNMENT.** There being no further business to discuss, the motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously.

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Rob Grant, Vice-Chairman

Attest:

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Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk