

HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION

September 7, 2021

6:30 P.M.

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

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chairman Zuerner called the Regular Session to order.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** Chairman Zuerner led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **MINUTES.** The motion to approve the minutes of the August 17, 2021 Regular Session was made by Commissioner Langston, seconded by Commissioner Andrews, and passed unanimously.
4. **APPEARANCE OF CITIZENS**

- A. **Curt Pechloff, NWHFD Chief: Fire Services in Northwest Area of County.** Kelly Pechloff, spouse of Curt Pechloff, who has been deployed to Louisiana to help with hurricane relief, appeared before the Board to inform them that Northwest Harris Volunteer Fire Department (NWHVFD) is “no longer going to be running Flat Shoals fire district calls; that it is not part of their district and they will no longer be servicing that district”. In response to questions, Byron Hawkins, former Chief of NWHVFD, said that NWHVFD has been running the Flat Shoals calls for almost 20 years without backup; that there is no cooperation from West Point Fire Department (WPFD) in running the calls; that with COVID, the VFDs are more involved in calls for fire alarms or EMS and not just fire; that NWHVFD does not get credit for running calls outside of their area; that WPFD chooses not to go outside their district; that efforts to resurrect the Flat Shoals VFD have been unsuccessful; that the calls are getting to be too much for NWHVFD; that a realignment of the fire districts is needed to help solve the problem; that every County Manager has looked at the problem but nothing has been accomplished; that NWHVFD is not saying it won’t participate in fire issues (in the Flat Shoals area) if needed; and that at times, WPFD responds and has their fire hoses out, but once NWHVFD gets on the scene, they roll up their hoses and leave rather than help in responding.

Discussion included that the 1995 agreement with West Point is based on LOST negotiations; that West Point receives \$13,894 annually in stipends per the agreement; that in the late 90s, the Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) sets out that the fire departments in the municipalities do not have to provide fire services outside their city limits, and while West Point does not, the other four (Hamilton, Pine Mountain, Shiloh, Waverly Hall) do; that NWHVFD has at least 2-3 calls per month in the Flat Shoals area; that back-up is Antioch, Pine Mountain, and Hopewell; that the LOST is up for renegotiation in December 2022; that meetings were held with the County Manager, the West Point City Manager, Commissioner Grant, and West Point fire chief Mit Smith; that a proposal was brought before the Board but there was no consensus to move forward; that the proposal included the construction of a fire station in the NW Harris Business Park, which was opposed by NWHVFD; and that the County does not provide fire services, but relies on private volunteer fire departments for such.

Discussion was halted due to the scheduled Public Hearing, and the Board reached a consensus to continue the discussion to try and find a resolution to the issue during its next Planning Retreat in late September.

5. **PUBLIC HEARING @ 7:00 PM**
 - A. **Conflict of Interest.** The Conflict of Interest forms were completed at the request of Chairman Zuerner.
 - B. **Explanation of Public Hearing Procedures.** Chairman Zuerner explained the procedures for the scheduled Public Hearing.
 - C. **Application of Antioch Volunteer Fire Department and Warren & Yvonne Popp to Rezone 1.69 acres on Map 017, Parcel 144 & Part of Parcel 022A, Land Lot 27, Land District 19; from A-1 (Agricultural/Forestry) to C-4 (Highway Commercial); current use Antioch VFD and vacant land; proposed use to increase parking/training area of Antioch VFD; property located at 5430 and 5411 GA Highway 219, Hamilton.** Chairman Zuerner called the Public Hearing to order, read the specifics of the application and said that the Planning Commission and Planning Staff had recommended approval. Richard McKinney, Antioch VFD Chief, appeared before the Board and said the VFD needs to increase its parking and training area; that they were using the property across the street for such until Dollar General was constructed; and that they have an opportunity to purchase .69 acres in order to add to the VFD property. There being no questions, Chairman Zuerner asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of or in opposition to this application. There being none, he closed the Public Hearing and asked for a motion. The motion to approve was made by Commissioner Langston, seconded by Chairman Zuerner, and passed unanimously.

6. **OLD BUSINESS**

A. **Second Reading: Application of Kim Tharp for Temporary Special Event Alcohol License for an event at Lake Franklin Event Center, FD Roosevelt State Park.**

Chairman Zuerner read the specifics of the application, said that this was the second reading, that the applicant meets all qualifications, that the application has been recommended for approval from the Sheriff, but that recommendations were 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 is excited to hold the Soil to Soul event on September 11, at FD Roosevelt State Park. Chairman Zuerner asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of or in opposition to this application. There being none, he asked for a motion. The motion to approve this Temporary Special Event Alcohol License (for one day) was made by Commissioner Irions, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously.

7. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **Proclamation: American Business Women's Day.** Chairman Zuerner asked Commissioner Langston to read the document proclaiming Wednesday, September 22, 2021, as American Business Women's Day. Following the reading, the motion to approve the document was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Chairman Zuerner, and passed unanimously.

B. **Resolution: ARP Act Funding for Airport.** Chairman Zuerner said that in order for the County to receive \$32,000 for the Airport from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, the resolution authorizing acceptance of a GDOT contract for same is required. The motion to approve the resolution was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously. (Contract document, once received, can be found in "Contracts & Agreements" file as C&A #21-15.)

C. **Agreement: Traylor Business Services.** Chairman Zuerner said that this is the annual agreement for Personal Property Verification in the Tax Assessor's office, is the same as previous agreements, and the cost of \$7,500 is included in the FY 2021/22 Tax Assessor's budget. The motion to approve this agreement was made by Chairman Zuerner, seconded by Commissioner Irions, and passed unanimously. (Document can be found in "Contracts & Agreements" as C&A #21-16.)

D. **Request for Tax Refund.** Chairman Zuerner said that a request for tax refund in the amount of \$577.12 had been received from Garrett Faulkner for the reason that he paid the 2020 taxes for a skid steer that was sold in 2019; and that both the Tax Commissioner and the Board of Assessors agree with the request. The motion to refund the \$577.12 was made by Commissioner Langston, seconded by Commissioner Andrews, and passed unanimously.

8. **COUNTY MANAGER**

A. **LMIG 2022 Road List.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that GDOT is accepting applications for the 2022 LMIG program and has notified the County that its share is \$811,925.40, which will require a 10% match of \$81,192.54 from T-SPLOST, for a total of \$893,117.94 for resurfacing needs; that the Public Works Director has determined there are three (3) roads (Trammell Mill Road, Calhoun Road, and Copeland Road) in need of resurfacing and restriping; that it is proposed the three roads be submitted to GDOT for the upcoming LMIG distribution; and that any overage that may result from the project will also come from T-SPLOST.

Bobby Haralson, citizen who signed up to speak on this issue, appeared before the Board and said he lives on A Circle, which hasn't been resurfaced in many years; that roads have had issues since James York left employment with the County; and that if there is paint on A Circle, he'll eat it. He continued by saying there are too many things going on that are not right; that he is going to the VA to complain that this building (the Courthouse) does not meet ADA requirements; that even though he has high-priced hearing aids, he still can't hear anything going on (in the meeting); that the IRS owes him money and Harris County owes him \$3,000; that his ATV was stolen and the teenagers who stole it ran over his dog with the ATV, which was recovered; that he is a very unhappy 90 years old with 100% service disability; and that the County violates the Open Meetings law.

Chairman Zuerner thanked Mr. Haralson for his comments and asked for a motion regarding the LMIG 2022 list. The motion to approve the LMIG 2022 list was made by Chairman Zuerner, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously.

B. **Bid Award: Garbage Truck.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that the FY 2021-22 Solid Waste Fund budget includes \$240,000 for the purchase of one (1) replacement 25 CY garbage truck; that bids were prepared and advertised; and that two (2) bids were received on August 24, as follows:

	Environmental Products Atlanta GA	Peach State Truck Centers Norcross GA
Cab & Chassis	2021 Kenworth T370	2023 Freightliner 114SD
Compactor Body	Labrie 2R-111	2023 New Way Cobra Magnum
Delivery (Days)	90-120	150-180
Bid Amount	\$ 187,500.00	\$ 233,463.00

Mr. Dowling said that County staff had evaluated the bids and recommends that Peach State Truck Centers of Norcross be awarded the bid in the amount of \$233,463.00, which is \$6,537.00 (2.7%) below budget; that this company is the only company that met all bid specs for the chassis and compactor body; and that if approved, the new truck should be delivered in April 2022. The motion to award the bid to Peach State Truck Centers of Norcross for \$233,463.00 was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Chairman Zuerner, and passed unanimously.

- C. **Budget Amendment #1 FY 21-22: Purchase Used Ambulance.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that the County has an opportunity to purchase a used 2017 ambulance with 179,000 miles on it for \$25,000 from Custom Truck & Body Works, the company from whom the County has purchased its previous four ambulances; that staff believes this is a prudent acquisition to replace an older ambulance; that if approved, the funds will come from SPLOST 2019 (Public Safety Vehicles line); and that the funds from the future sale of an older ambulance will help offset the cost of the 2017 ambulance. Following discussion, the motion to approve the budget amendment #1 (FY 21-22) for the purchase of the 2017 ambulance in the amount of \$25,000, was made by Commissioner Langston. Commissioner Andrews asked that the motion be amended to indicate the purchase is pending the final review by the Vehicle Maintenance Director. Commissioner Langston amended her motion to include the purchase is pending the final review by the Vehicle Maintenance Director. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
- D. **Census 2020 Results.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that results of the 2020 Census show that the County's population increased from 32,024 in 2010 to 34,668 in 2020, an increase of 2,644.
- E. **Project Updates.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, reviewed various projects, as follows:
- (1) Chairs for Commissioners. On order but are not expected until November due to a problem with obtaining foam.
 - (2) 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.
 - (3) Prison Roof Replacement. Bid opens September 30 with Board consideration on October 19.
 - (4) LMIG 2022. List approved during tonight's meeting to be submitted to GDOT this week.
 - (5) Skid Steer for Public Works. Will be delivered in late September.
 - (6) Ellerslie Park Development. Gates, signs, lake aerator and dock have been ordered; construction of maintenance facility and pavilions underway; land clearing continues; and next Planning Retreat will be held in the lodge.
 - (7) Man O'War Railroad Recreation Trail, Phase IV (aka Rails to Trails). Project should be completed by early December 2021; US 27 at the railroad bridge will be closed Friday, Saturday & Sunday, September 10, 11 & 12, from 11 PM to 6 AM.
 - (8) Man O'War Railroad Recreation Trail, Phase V (aka Rails to Trails). Survey and design have begun.
 - (9) Airport Apron Rejuvenation. Project is out on bid; opens September 23 with Board consideration on October 5.
 - (10) Airport 5-Year CIP. Discussed during recent Airport meeting; action by Board on October 5 to send to GDOT.
 - (11) Garbage Truck. Awarded during tonight's meeting; delivery expected next April.
 - (12) Courthouse Renovations, Phase I. Design underway; project should be bid out in December, awarded in February and completed by June 2022.
 - (13) Federal ARP Funds Projects. To be discussed during the Work Session on September 21; list will be provided after tonight's meeting.

- (14) Impact Fee Study. Methodology report received and provided to the Impact Fee Committee for review and discussion during their meeting on Tuesday, September 14, at the Library, starting at 4:30 PM.
- (15) County Record Storage and Elections Office Relocation. The IGA with the Board of Education was effective September 1; efforts are underway to sort and move records to that location; and it is anticipated the Elections office can relocate to that building by the end of September.
- (16) T-SPLOST Referendum Assistance. Project continues; referendum is scheduled for May 2022; the County submitted five projects for consideration to the RVRC roundtable, who received over 200 projects costing \$1.8 billion with only \$399 million available.
- (17) SPLOST. Collections are keeping up with budget.
- (18) LOST. Collections are keeping up with budget.
- (19) T-SPLOST. Collections are keeping up with budget.
- (20) Single Family Home Permits. Issued 28 in August, for a total of 52 for this fiscal year.
- (21) Solid Waste Tonnage. Increasing.

9. **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

- A. **Request for Executive Session**. Russell Britt, County Attorney, requested an Executive Session for the purpose of discussing litigation.
10. **RECESS FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION**. The motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing litigation, personnel, and real estate disposition was made at 7:52 PM by Commissioner Langston, seconded by Chairman Zuerner, and passed unanimously.
11. **RECONVENE & ADJOURNMENT**. There being no further business to discuss, motion to reconvene the Regular Session and to adjourn the Regular Session was made by Commissioner Irions, seconded by Chairman Zuerner, and passed unanimously.

Andrew Zuerner, Chairman

Attest:

Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk