

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION**

May 20, 2008

7:00 PM

Commissioners Present: J. Harry Lange, Charles Wyatt, Joe F. Manning, Patrick Whearley.
Staff Present: Daniel B. Bridges, County Manager; John M. Taylor, County Attorney; Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chairman Lange called the Regular Session to order.
2. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA.** There being no other additions other than under Appearance of Citizens: Lynda Dawson, Leanne Harden, and Mike Jolley - Drug-Free Workplace Program for Businesses; and under the County Manager section: Site Grading at Northwest Harris Business Park, Chairman Lange declared the agenda to be set.
3. **MINUTES.** The motion to approve the minutes of the May 6, 2008, Regular Session was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Commissioner Whearley, and passed unanimously.
4. **APPEARANCE OF CITIZENS**
 - A. **Lynda Dawson: Georgia Trend Magazine.** Lynda Dawson, representing the Harris County Chamber of Commerce and the Development Authority of Harris County, appeared before the Board to discuss the purchase of a two-page "spread" in the July 2008 issue on Georgia Trend Magazine, which will be highlighting Harris County. Mrs. Dawson said that this is a good way for people to find out about us and what we have to offer, and that it will present Harris County in a manner that will benefit everyone; that the cost for the two-page spread is \$14,000, but that the cities, with the exception of Shiloh, the School Board and the Chamber will contribute funds totaling \$3,300, so the cost to the County would be \$10,700; that the article can be put on the County's website indefinitely; and that blow-ups of the ad and article will be provided to the County for use in various manners. Following discussion, Commissioner Wyatt made the motion to allow the Development Authority to use \$10,700 to purchase the ad. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Whearley, and Chairman Lange said that while he was not convinced that this advertising is what we need, he will not stand in the way of same. The motion passed with three in favor (Wyatt, Whearley, Lange) and one in opposition (Manning).
 - B. **Lynda Dawson, Leanne Harden, Mike Jolley: Drug Free Workplace Program for Businesses.** Mrs. Dawson, Mrs. Harden, and Sheriff Jolley appeared before the Board to explain the program and how it would benefit the employees of businesses. Following the presentation and discussion, the motion to approve the Sheriff using up to \$5,000 to help fund the program was made by Commissioner Manning, seconded by Commissioner Whearley, and passed unanimously.
 - C. **Donnie Jones (VFW): Liquor/Mixed Drinks.** Donnie Jones, Commander of the local VFW, appeared before the Board to read and present a petition of 126 signatures of VFW members and affiliated patrons requesting a liquor pouring license. Discussion included that a petition of registered voters and a referendum would be required whether the pouring license would be for all restaurants or just for a private club. John Taylor, County Attorney, was directed to look into the matter and report back to the Board.
5. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. **Financial Statement: February 2008.** The motion to approve the February 2008 Financial Statement was made by Chairman Lange, seconded by Commissioner Manning, and passed unanimously.
 - B. **Public Hearing I: FY 08/09 Budget (General Fund, Small Funds, Solid Waste & Water Works.** Chairman Lange called the Public Hearing to order and asked Danny Bridges, County Manager, to review the proposed budgets.

General Funds. Mr. Bridges said that a revised page of the General Fund had been distributed; that the adjustments reflected on the second page were included with the revised front page; and that the proposed budget is \$15,361,900.

Small Funds. Mr. Bridges said that no changes had been made since the last

discussion with the Board.

Solid Waste. Mr. Bridges said that unless an increase is made to the annual solid water fee, the department will have a deficit again this year; that by increasing the annual fee now, it may not be necessary to change the fee again for several years; that it is suggested the fee be increased from \$104 to \$150 ; and that some apartments in the County that pay half the regular fee and total approximately \$11,700. Discussion included that the apartments should pay the full fee just like property owners and that increasing the garbage fee is probably necessary; that by increasing the apartments to the full fee would bring in an additional +/- \$11,700, which should be used to offset the recommended increases; and that by doing it, it would reduce the recommendation by \$1.00. The motion for apartments to pay the full price for once a week pick up was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Commissioner Manning, and passed unanimously. The motion to increase the annual solid waste fee from \$104 to \$149 was made by Commissioner Manning, seconded by Commissioner Wyatt, and passed unanimously.

Water Works. Mr. Bridges said that he has some concerns about the proposed budget and will be talking with Jeff Culpepper, Water Works Director, next week and hopes to have adjustments made; that the current budget shows revenues at \$3,615,630 and expenditures at \$3,687,569.76, a deficit of over \$71,000.

Mr. Bridges concluded by saying that salary increases contemplated by other counties has also been included in the previously distributed material. Chairman Lange asked if anyone had comments or questions regarding any of the budgets.

Bob Moulder, citizen, asked about the increase in the budget over last year (about 2.5%); the effect the tax digest would have on same; and that the Board of Education is estimating a 9% increase. In response, Mr. Bridges said that the tax digest has not yet been completed, so we don't know how it will effect the budget, but that he anticipates the millage rate being reduced again this year; that the proposed budget will not call for any increase in millage and whatever revalues are, the County should be able to roll back the millage rate in an amount equal to the revalues.

There being no further comments or questions, Chairman Lange declared the Public Hearing closed.

C. Requests for Tax Refunds. Chairman Lange said that there are seven requests for Tax Refunds for the Board to consider. Danny Bridges, County Manager, said that one of those requests, from Madeline Condrey, should be tabled to the June 3 meeting since Ms. Condrey requested a public hearing concerning her request and she was not notified about such. There were no objections to tabling Ms. Condrey's request to June 3. Commissioner Wyatt said that he would like to consider the others together but Commissioner Manning asked that the request from Fred Jones be addressed separately. Therefore, Chairman Lange read the remaining five requests as follows:

- (1) Gonzales, Franeisco d/b/a Computer Barn. Refund request of \$101.38 since he has not been in business in Harris County since May 2007 and the assessment is incorrect. The Board of Assessors agrees with the Tax Commissioner that the request should be denied because Mr. Gonzales should have filed a return.
- (2) Ingersoll, Gudrun H. Refund request of \$124.42 since he renewed his vehicle tag 30 days prior to renewal and then traded in the vehicle on another. The Board of Assessors agrees with the Tax Commissioner that the request should be denied because tags are renewable 30 days prior to expiration and no earlier.
- (3) Kade, LLP d/b/a Mountain Creek. Refund request of \$598.15 since he closed the business in November 2004, is still in the antique business but not in Harris County, but has been paying the taxes. The Board of Assessors agrees with the Tax Commissioner that the request should be denied because the return should have been filed by April 1.
- (4) Monroe Properties, LLC. Refund request of \$493.63 since they never received a bill. The Board of Assessors agrees with the Tax Commissioner that the request should be approved because records shows that a bill was not mailed to Monroe.
- (5) Shoemaker, Benjamin and Susan. Refund request of \$74.49 since they never received a bill, just a notice from the mortgage company that the taxes were

due. The Board of Assessors agrees with the Tax Commissioner that the request should be denied because records show that a bill was mailed to Mr/Mrs Shoemaker at their current address.

The motion to stand by the decision of the Tax Commissioner and Board of Tax Assessors (i.e. deny Gonzales, Ingersoll, Kade, Shoemaker; and approved Monroe) was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Chairman Lange, and passed unanimously.

- (6) Jones, Fred & Sammie. Refund request of \$152.57 since he mailed the check on December 15, 2007, but the Tax Commissioner never received same. The Board of Tax Assessors agrees with the Tax Commissioner that this request should be denied because payment was not received, but that if the check (postmarked December 15, 2007) is ever received, the refund would be made).

Commissioner Manning made the motion to approve this request to refund \$152.27. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Whearley and passed unanimously.

6. COUNTY MANAGER

- A. **Comprehensive Plan Update Completion**. Danny Bridges, County Manager, said that he and Chairman Lange met with Patti Cullen of the Lower Chattahoochee RDC and learned that the Georgia Department of Community Affairs had added more requirements that are necessary for the Comprehensive Plan to be approved; that those requirements are items for which no information had yet been obtained; that the cost to obtain same and produce the finished product for approval by the Georgia DCA would be \$10,000, which has been included in the proposed budget discussed earlier in the meeting; that no one will "pick up" the Plan as it now stands and finish it; and that another county chose not to have its RDC prepare its update and is paying \$100,000 for same, while our update will now total \$45,000. Following some discussion, the motion to approve paying \$10,000 to the Lower Chattahoochee RDC to complete the Plan update for approval by the Georgia DCA was made by Commissioner Manning, seconded by Chairman Lange, and passed unanimously. (Document can be found in "Contracts & Agreements" file as C&A #08-19A.)
- B. **Agreement: Farner Barley for Engineering Services regarding 20 +/- acres at Northwest Harris Business Park**. Danny Bridges, County Manager, said that this agreement is in connection with the prospective business to be located at the Northwest Harris Business Park; that the total is \$48,000 but he recommends deleting Task V (\$10,500), thus reducing the cost of \$37,500; and that the agreement is necessary to get started on the work since the prospect wants to locate in the business park as soon as possible. The motion to approve this agreement at a cost of \$37,500 was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Chairman Lange, and passed unanimously. (Document can be found in "Contracts & Agreements" file as C&A #08-20.)
- C. **Letter of Support to OneGeorgia re: Daesol American Corporation**. Danny Bridges, County Manager, said that as part of the application to OneGeorgia for a \$1,200,000 grant to assist in locating Daesol in the Northwest Harris Business Park, this letter of support is necessary. The motion to approve the execution of the letter of support was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Chairman Lange, and passed unanimously.
- D. **Northwest Harris Business Park Site Grading**. Danny Bridges, County Manager, said that there is no way that the Public Works crews can perform the site grading necessary in connection with Daesol America; that to out-source this work will be expensive; and that he is still in the process of obtaining costs and will advise the Board of same.
- E. **Pump Station on McKee Road**. Danny Bridges, County Manager, advised the Board that the water line and new pump station on McKee Road is now functional and providing water, and that water is now along McKee Road to Georgia Highway 315.
- F. **SPLOST Meetings with Cities**. Danny Bridges, County Manager, recommended that the Board meet with the five cities during the June 3 Work Session, for about 15 minutes each, to discuss the proposed SPLOST projects. There were no objections. Letters will be mailed to the cities regarding same.

7. OTHER

- A. **Water District.** Chairman Lange reminded the Board that during the June 3 meeting, it should make a decision as to whether or not to change water districts from the Middle Chattahoochee to the Upper Flint.
- B. **ACCG Committees.** Chairman Lange said that the County is represented on ACCG committees with the exception of the General County Government and Public Safety and Courts and that the County should have representation on those. Commissioner Manning said that he will be on the General County Government Committee. Chairman Lange asked Nancy McMichael, County Clerk, to let ACCG know that Commissioner Manning would like to be on the General County Committee, and that if any Commissioner wants to be on the Public Safety and Courts Committee, to also let Mrs. McMichael know so that she can advise ACCG.
8. **COUNTY ATTORNEY**
- A. **Agreement: DOC Care and Custody of State Inmates in County Prison.** John Taylor, County Attorney, said that is the usual agreement regarding the inmates housed in the County Prison and that he recommended approval of same. The motion to approve this agreement was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Commissioner Whearley, and passed unanimously. (Document can be found in "Contracts & Agreements" file as C&A #08-21.)
- B. **Request for Executive Session.** John Taylor, County Attorney, requested an Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel issue and real estate acquisition.
9. **RECESS FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION.** The motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter and real estate acquisition was made at 8:18 PM by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Commissioner Manning, and passed unanimously.
10. **RESUME REGULAR SESSION.** The motion to go back into Regular Session was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Chairman Lange, and passed unanimously.
11. **OTHER (CONTINUED)**
- C. **Real Estate Acquisition: Abandoned Rail Road Line.** The motion to, pending the approval of Meriwether County and a private source of \$200,000 each, pay up to \$200,00 to acquire from Georgia Southwestern Railroad the abandoned rail road land in Harris and Meriwether Counties.
- D. **Salary Increase: 911 Department.** The motion to approve the salary for an individual transferring from EMS to 911 as the Assistant 911 Director, a salaried position, at \$15.30 an hour was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Commissioner Whearley, and passed unanimously.
12. **ADJOURNMENT.** There being no further business, the motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Manning, seconded by Commissioner Wyatt, and passed unanimously.

Attest:

J. Harry Lange, Chairman

Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk