

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION**

August 5, 2008

7:00 PM

Commissioners Present: J. Harry Lange, Charles Wyatt, Joey M. Loudermilk, 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. **MINUTES.** Commissioner Loudermilk commented that the Called Session minutes of July 23 reflect that Commissioner Whearley was both present and absent. There being no other changes, the motion to approve the minutes of the July 23 Called Session and the July 15 Regular Session was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Commissioner Whearley, and passed unanimously.
3. **OTHER**
 - A. **Alonzo Whitaker.** Alonzo Whitaker, candidate for Superior Court Judge, appeared before the Board, introduced himself, and briefly discussed his candidacy.
 - B. **Property Taxes.** Chairman Lange said that many property tax assessments were recently mailed and that he understands many in the audience want to discuss this matter. He said there were two items on the agenda in connection with property taxes, which will be moved up on the agenda. Chairman Lange said he wanted to give some explanation as to how property taxes work and the concerns of the Commissioners regarding same. He said that property taxes is based on the millage which is determined by the School Board and the Board of Commissioners, with each Board independently setting their own millage rate; that neither Board has input into the other's millage; that the School Board decides on its rate, advises the County, and the Tax Commissioner collects the taxes for the School Board; that the Commissioners set the millage for the County's portion; that Georgia law requires property to be reassessed every three years, but unfortunately, Harris County has not done that; that for the last few years, the Tax Assessor has been trying to bring the County into compliance with State regulations; for those people who have not been reassessed in 20 to 30 years or more, it has created quite a burden; that once property has been assessed, the increase cannot be staggered to reduce the burden according to the State; that the tax digest must go to the State for review and approval before tax bills are sent, therefore, the State determines whether or not the taxes are acceptable; that the County is now current and all property has been revaluated; that the County is no longer the sleepy little County it used to be with many people and developers coming in, which force land values to increase; that the Commissioners are concerned, particularly for the elderly on fixed incomes and those whose incomes may be restrictive; and that if valuations come in less than what one would sell their property for, it doesn't necessarily make it easier, but it does reflect it is a reasonable revaluation. He also said that the Commissioners have been looking at how to better control the property taxes and, with the approval of State Legislation, the question of increasing homestead exemption for those over 65 will be on the ballot in November; that the majority of the County's budget is based on property tax; that the County has been within budget for a number of years and has been run efficiently; and that the millage rate has not been increased for a number of years and that a reduction is anticipated this year. Regarding a possible tax freeze, Chairman Lange said that to some degree that is okay as long as you are in a growing county with new people coming in, but when growth slows down, trouble begins. Also, he said, the County provides services to citizens and the costs for those services increase or decrease depending on the economy; that the County has to be in a position to continue to run and provide the services the citizens want; and that Commissioners are considering requesting the State Legislation to put a limit or a cap on the property increase that can be applied unless there is a change in property owners or a change to the property, either statewide or allowing the County to put it on the next applicable ballot (in 2009).
 - C. **Tax Assessment Letter to State Senator and Representatives.** Danny Bridges, County Manager, explained that the letter is to request a limit of 3% as to the increase in property assessments in any one year; that the State has been discussing this off and on for a few years; and in lieu of the limit being statewide, Harris County is requesting that it be allowed to put the question before the citizens on the next applicable ballot. Following a brief discussion, the motion to approve the letter was made by Commissioner Loudermilk, and Commissioner Whearley

asked that it be voted on after the citizens speak tonight.

- D. **Millage Rate.** Danny Bridges, County Manager, said that the County is currently advertising the meeting for setting the millage rate; that the current millage rate is 7.47, which was down from 7.90 the previous year; and that with revaluations and the rollback, the millage rate is projected to be 6.14. He said that the County's budget has been approved, and it is being recommended that there be no increase in tax dollars, which means we would collect the same amount of tax dollars this year that we did last year, so the dollar increase would basically be zero; and that there is one caveat ---- there are about 700 appeals as a result of the property reassessments and if all of the appeals are approved, it will result in about \$200,000 in lost revenue, but that the County's fund balance could withstand that hit in all likelihood. Chairman Lange said that some individuals will see an increase in taxes, but the amount the County collects as a whole would be the same as last year. Mr. Bridges said that if someone's property assessment went up a lot, in all likelihood, there will be an increase in their taxes, but not as much, but the income to the County will not go up. Discussion included that the recommendation is to reduce the millage rate by 1.33 to 6.14; that this year's budget went up by 2.8% so the amount of money collected will be the same amount as the previous year; that should there be a shortfall, there are funds in Fund Balance; and that the Commissioners will vote to set the millage on Tuesday, August 26 at 7:00 PM.
4. **APPEARANCE OF CITIZENS.** Chairman Lange said that the Board is looking forward to hearing from the citizens and asked that those who have signed up to speak have something different to say versus repeating what has been said. (Note: approximately 60 to 100 people were in attendance.)
- A. **Property Tax Assessment: Charles Hart.** Charles Hart, citizen, appeared before the Board, distributed a resolution, and discussed various issues and concerns regarding the recent property assessments. He said that everyone appreciated the Board's concern and show of interest in the recent property assessment increases; that citizens are wondering why property values have not be reassessed in many years and what took so long for the reassessments to be completed; that the reassessments were done aggressively in that citizens were told by Tax Assessors that if they weren't granted access to their property, aerial photos would be used, which intimidated citizens; that three attempts were made to come to his property, but "fortunately I was busy and didn't have the time to do that"; that properties were reassessed with or without the property owners being there; that County and School improvements are appreciated and understood and about \$1.9 million came in from the last round of taxes with about \$600,000 coming to the County, and he asked about the plans and use of those funds; that the timing of the reassessments is in question, as is the tax due date of December 20; and that many would like to pay part of the tax in September with the balance due in November. He said that citizens would like to have immediate relief by having a lower millage rate and recommended a property tax freeze; that many people came here from Columbus to purchase land and have a lower tax base, both of which make the County attractive; and that in Columbus they have to spend the money budgeted or they won't have it in the next budget. Regarding the resolution presented to the Board and to the citizens in attendance, he said it is in regard to how property values are assessed in the State and for approval by the Commissioners to present same to the State Representatives. He continued by saying that the County needs to slow things down before the "cart gets ahead of the horse"; that in 1978 the State of California passed Proposition 13, which froze property taxes, and that over the years, the average per capita grew over 10 times the national average, and that since then 24 states have ratified some type of tax freeze or limitations, but Georgia is not one of those states; that Muscogee County voted in a tax freeze in 1983 and that seven times lifting the freeze has been defeated by the voters in Muscogee County; and that the citizens would like to see some action by the Commissioners and know what their plans are, and that at some point enough is enough and that is what the citizens are saying. (Document submitted can be found in "Miscellaneous Documents" file as MD#08-12.)
- B. **Property Tax Assessment: Jimmy Hart.** Jimmy Hart, citizen, who lives at 1592 Fortson Road, appeared before the Board and said the resolution presented to the Board is for a tax freeze on the homestead, for the home and two acres, and any additional property, commercial property or rental property are not included; that it will benefit the young and the old; that a tax freeze is a fair way to do business since reassessments would take place when property is sold; and that there are about nine counties in Georgia with some type of tax freeze. He said that while he is glad to see a reduction in the millage rate, it can go up next year.
- C. **Property Tax Assessment: Werner Aguilar.** Werner Aguilar, citizen, who lives at

6644 Georgia Highway 85, Ellerslie, appeared before the Board and said that he has two properties, one being 1.64 acres and one 1.43; that his taxes were \$1,120 in 2002, \$1,467 in 2007, and based on the new assessment, will be \$2,520 this year; that he figured the assessment per acre is \$16,137; that his assessment in 2002 was \$98,800, in 2003 \$146,148, in 2006 \$165,503, and now \$256,900; and that something needs to be done to make things more equal. He also referenced the class codes for properties in that his changed from A4 to R4.

- D. **Property Tax Assessment: Patrick Strupe.** Patrick Strupe, citizen, who lives at 6648 Georgia Highway 85, Ellerslie, appeared before the Board and said that he has lived there about 20 years; that he applauds the County for having public information available for public access; that it appears that R4 class code is assessed at a higher value (he referenced two properties as examples); and that real estate pricing is going in a downward direction.
- E. **Property Tax Assessment: Whitley Culverson.** Whitley Culverson, citizen, who lives on Highway 208, appeared before the Board and said that the majority of his concerns have been addressed by those who previously appeared.
- F. **Property Tax Assessment: Johnny R. Gore.** Johnny Gore, citizen, who lives at 11810 Georgia Highway 315, Cataula, appeared before the Board and said that he has been in the area about 18 years; that he has always been a renter and then was able to buy property a few years ago; that it would be a shame for him to lose the property due to taxes; that he is disabled and on a very low income of \$666 per month; and that with the way the economy is, the County is wanting to go up on taxes. In response to a question, Mr. Gore said when he purchased his property it was assessed at \$60,071 but is now assessed at \$70,543.
- G. **Property Tax Assessment: Terry Whitley.** Terry Whitley, citizen, who lives at 457 Alexander Lane, said that he has lived there since 1978; that he gets nothing for his taxes; that he cut a road into his place; that there are 13 lots on the road; that he and his neighbors have been before the Board to have the County maintain the road; that he pays for trash pickup but doesn't use it; that he has 15 acres that are landlocked; and because he can't do anything with the property, he would like to know how it is appraised since it is the same as that in Plantation Creek and Chase Plantation.
- H. **Property Tax Assessment: James Sikes.** James Sikes, citizen, who lives at 2424 Lower Blue Springs Road, appeared before the Board and said that citizens are in disagreement with, disappointed in and disgusted with the Board of Tax Assessors; that many moved to Harris County for the serenity, beauty, high quality of living, and reasonable taxes, and the message being sent to farm and conservation acreage owners is that that is no longer desirable in the County; that he has owned his farm since 1986 and his property valuation rates differ as much as \$1,000 on the same property that was divided for financial and estate planning; that assessments are so flawed and should be trashed and start over; and he urges everyone to appeal their assessment and take it wherever he has to take it to get justice.
- I. **Property Tax Assessment: Richard McGuire, Sr.** Richard McGuire, Sr., citizen, who lives at 247 Shagbark Trail, appeared before the Board and said that he appreciates the possibility of a higher homestead exemption; that he has two homes on one piece of property; that his assessment in 2005 was \$145,900, in 2006 it was \$295,984 and now it is \$394,868; that he believes his home is over-valued, but he understands it is based on whatever you can get for it; that he is appealing his valuation; that he noticed the property is shown separate from the improvements and doesn't understand the reason for same; and that he thinks taxes are too high in Harris County, are getting to be immoral, and something needs to be done.
- J. **Property Tax Assessment: Richard Barfield.** Mr. Barfield said that all his issues had been discussed.
- K. **Property Tax Assessment: Lorice Robinson.** Not in attendance.
- L. **Property Tax Assessment: Rodney Barfield.** Not in attendance.

Chairman Lange thanked the citizens who spoke and said there is no good answer regarding the delay in assessing all the property in the County; that when Wayne Morris was hired as Tax Assessor, it was brought to light that all the property assessments had not be done; that how or why the State did not catch the error, we do not know; and that Mr. Morris is doing what the State requires in connection with property assessments.

Danny Bridges, County Manager, said that the due date of December 20 can't be changed since it is State law, but it is possible to split the collection of taxes, and Chairman Lange said that the Board will discuss that possibility. Chairman Lange said that regarding the comment that a department in another county had indicated if they didn't spend their budgeted amount, they would lose it, he wanted to assure the citizens that is not the attitude of the Commissioners in Harris County nor does it affect what their budget will be next year and does not penalize the departments; that we have Department Heads who spend very cautiously and efficiently; and that with the financial statement for June 2008, every department except one came in under budget. Regarding where the funds will go, the cost for services continue to rise; that the County's millage rate is in the bottom third of all the counties in the State; that the County's square miles is in the top third of all the counties in the State, so the Sheriff's Department has a large area to cover; that keeping roads resurfaced and travelable costs are going up; and that with the continued growth, there is always a demand for more services.

Chairman Lange then asked Wayne Morris, Tax Assessor, to explain the reassessment process. He also said that the comments by Mr. Morris are not for discussion purposes, but if there are questions, citizens can contact the Tax Assessor's office at a later time.

Mr. Morris said that he is on the side of the audience about freezing values/taxes because it would make his job easier; that his office puts a fair market value on property, which is what is required by Georgia code; that he can't say why it wasn't done for years and years in Harris County, but when he was hired by Harris County he found many, many parcels that had not be changed for years, and the process was started to reassess property; that property is physically inspected, which is allowed by State law, to make sure data is correct and it is in everyone's best interest to have accurate data; that they take measurements and sometimes they go inside property particularly regarding the square footage for basements and attics; that when people see errors regarding their property on the website, which is easy to navigate, they contact his office about it; that if the owner is home, they know when his staff visits the property; that if the owner is not home, a notice is left regarding the need to contact his office and his phone number is on the assessment notice; that Georgia code requires that his office look at the sales of existing property, and all property sale comes through his office; that 90% of the sales have a fair market value lower than what the property sold for; that they try to stay on the low end of valuation; that the class codes are codes for the Department of Revenue and not zoning; that about 11,000 notices were mailed out this year; that one way to help citizens is through conservation use values, which reduce the taxable amount if you have 10 acres or more; that when property starts out at \$900 an acre and increases to \$2,000 an acre, that is an increase of 300%, but you're still looking at \$2,000 an acre, and you can't find land in Harris County for \$2,000 an acre; and that values are broken down by land, buildings and accessories, and on the sale sheet, it should be shown in the same fashion.

Chairman Lange thanked Mr. Morris and again advised those in attendance that if they had questions they should contact Mr. Morris or his staff.

Commissioner Manning said that the County is looking at cutting the millage by about 20%, but one won't realize much difference unless the Board of Education cuts its millage. Commissioner Wyatt said that the Board of Education gets 73% of the taxes and urged everyone to attend the Board of Education's meetings regarding its millage. Chairman Lange thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for their comments, and said that the Commission will take their comments under consideration.

5. **RECESS.** Chairman Lange announced a five-minute recess.
6. **OTHER (CONTINUED)**
 - C. **Tax Assessment Letter to State Senator and Representatives (continued).** Chairman Lange said that prior to the appearance of citizens, Commissioner Whearley had tabled action on the letter, and he asked for comments. Commissioner Whearley asked that action be tabled to the next meeting in order to do more research on the tax freeze. Commissioner Manning said that he agreed, and that he would like to see the tax freeze and the letter on the next agenda.
7. **OLD BUSINESS**
 - A. **Decision: Amendment to Zoning Ordinance, Article V, Section 8, to Prohibit Parking on County Right-of-Way for More Than 48 Hours.** Chairman Lange said that the Public Hearings regarding the amendment, which had been requested by Gary Lowman, citizen who lives on Alabama Road, had been held and closed;

that the Planning Commission had recommended approval of the amendment but changed the hours to 72; and that Commissioner Wyatt tabled action to this meeting. He then asked for discussion or a motion. Discussion included that there may be instances or circumstances where there is a need to park a vehicle on the right-of-way; that in some areas there are no places to park except on the right-of-way; that enforcement of same would be by Code Enforcement; that the time would not start until the Code Enforcement Officer sees the vehicle; that the hours should be 96 hours to allow for long weekends; and that unless the vehicle is posing a traffic hazard, there is no authority under the code to tow the vehicle; and that violations would have a penalty of \$1,000 a day and would be heard in Magistrate Court. Commissioner Loudermilk made the motion to approve the amendment but change the hours to 96. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Whearley. Chairman Lange said there are instances where vehicles have to be parked for a short period of time and the 96 hours will give ample time. The motion passed with three in favor (Loudermilk, Whearley, Lange) and two opposed (Manning, Wyatt).

- B. **Second Reading: Ordinance to Amend Section 3.5-3(b) of Article I, Chapter 3.5 of the Code of Ordinances to Prohibit Smoking and Tobacco Products in County Public Parks and/or Recreation Areas.** Chairman Lange said this was the second reading of the amendment to prohibit smoking and tobacco products in recreation areas. He said that Commissioner Whearley had received 36 e-mails in favor of and 12 e-mails opposed to the amendment and that John Magazu, Recreation Director, said that the comments he received ran 50/50. Chairman Lange asked if anyone in attendance wished to speak in favor of or in opposition to the amendment. There being none, Commissioner Whearley made the motion to approve the amendment and Chairman Lange seconded. Discussion included the location of areas currently used for smoking in each park; that moving the smoking areas might be a way to solve the problem; and that it may be worthwhile trying to find a more suitable location for the use of such products at each park, but if that is not possible, then move forward with the amendment. Consensus was for Danny Bridges, County Manager, and John Magazu, Recreation Director, to try to find a better location for the use of such products in order to accommodate those who smoke and who may be at the parks for several hours at a time. Action on the motion was tabled to the August 19 meeting. John Taylor, County Attorney, said that if a suitable location can be found, action will not be necessary but the motion should be withdrawn.

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. **Error & Release: Welson, Carrie.** Chairman Lange read the Error & Release request of Carrie Welson, in care of Willie Walker, to correct the Digest amount of \$10,000 to zero because the parcel has been combined with another parcel. The motion to approve this Error & Release request was made by Commissioner Whearley, seconded by Commissioner Wyatt, and passed unanimously.
- B. **Amend Capacity Agreement for Prison Inmates.** Chairman Lange said that the County currently has an agreement with the Department of Corrections regarding the care and custody of 110 inmates but that an amendment has been made to the agreement. John Taylor, County Attorney, said that the amendment is for the County to notify the Department of Corrections anytime an inmate is transferred to a hospital requiring an overnight stay or treatment costing over \$1,000. The motion to approve the amendment was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Commissioner Loudermilk, and passed unanimously. (Document can be found in "Contracts & Agreements" file as C&A #08-36.)
- C. **First Reading: Ordinance to Amend Section 2-32(a) of Article II, Chapter 2 of the Code of Ordinances Regarding Review of Background Checks for Adult Volunteers in Recreation Programs.** Chairman Lange said that this amendment would change the review of background checks from the County Attorney to the County Manager and the County Clerk, who would make the proper notification. John Taylor, County Attorney, said that based on previous background checks, probably 90% are clean with the remaining 10% having varying degrees of misconduct, and those have to be reviewed closer to determine whether or not the individuals ultimately can or cannot volunteer. He then explained the process of notification as to being qualified or disqualified. Chairman Lange asked if anyone in attendance wished to comment on the amendment. There being none, he said that the Second Reading with possible action will be during the August 19 meeting.

9. **COUNTY MANAGER**

A. **Road Issues.**

- (1) **Morgan Copeland Road: Water Line and Property Issues.** Danny Bridges, County Manager, advised the Board that approximately 70% of the 12" water line serving Morgan Copeland Road lies under the road; that he met with Jeff Culpepper, Water Works Director, and Allen Culpepper, Public Works Director, with the outcome being that the cost to replace the water line would be around \$200,000 at this time, and to go forward with paving the road and make water line repairs, which may include removing and patching sections of the road, when needed. Regarding the property issues, Mr. Bridges said that only 69% of the property owners have signed the right-of-way deeds; that in some cases, we can't locate an owner; that there are two pieces of property that are .01 acre, one that is .05, one that is slightly over .50, one that is .50, and one that is slightly less than .50; that a better job needs to be done when laying out a road to avoid having such small pieces of property (.01, .05, etc.); that he and Bill Patrick, County Engineer, are trying to contact owners; and that it might be better just to buy those small pieces of property rather than taking the owners to court. Consensus was to continue moving forward with contacting the property owners until September 1 before the Board moves forward with voting on condemnation proceedings.
- (2) **Moon Road Right of Way Issues.** Danny Bridges, County Manager, said that even though the Board approved condemning some property, he and Bill Patrick, County Engineer, are making efforts to re-contact and talk to the owners to obtain signatures.
- (3) **Road Lists in General.** Danny Bridges, County Manager, said that part of the problems with our road lists is that we've been putting roads on the lists, paying to have the road surveyed, and then running into difficulties with property owners. Nancy McMichael, County Clerk, said that our practice used to be to send out letters to property owners asking whether or not they would provide the necessary r/w for roads, and if we got favorable responses of 80% or more we would proceed, but if not, they weren't added to the lists. Mr. Bridges said that he will have a report for the Board in the not too distance future of all the roads we are working on and those that need work to include a schedule as to when they will be done, like a five-year plan.

B. **Mountain Hill School Foundation: TE Match.** Danny Bridges, County Manager, reminded the Board that there is about \$20,000 remaining on the TE grant with the Foundation's share being 20%; and that it is being requested that the County pay the Foundation's match. He said that the County administers the TE grant; that when the application was submitted to DOT, it was for specific projects and costs; that DOT has to approve the use of the remaining funds toward one project; and that if the request is approved it should be with the stipulation of DOT approval. The motion for the County to match the \$4,000, pending DOT approval, was made by Commissioner Whearley, seconded by Commissioner Wyatt, and passed unanimously.

C. **Mehaffey Road: State Portion.** Danny Bridges, County Manager, said that the northern end of Mehaffey Road is in bad shape and is a State road; and that DOT has offered to resurface the State portion of Mehaffey Road if the County will accept it as a County road. Following discussion, the motion to accept DOT's offer was made by Commissioner Loudermilk, seconded by Commissioner Whearley, and passed unanimously.

D. **SPLOST Road List.** Danny Bridges, County Manager, said that he is still working on this project and hopes to have it ready for the August 19 meeting.

E. **LARP List.** Danny Bridges, County Manager, said that DOT has requested our LARP list for 2009 from which the State will pick; that last year Fortson Road was approved and is scheduled to be done this year; that the first three roads on the list were on last year's list and the last three are new; and that Cecily Drive and Cecily Court are also on the SPLOST list. The motion to approve the LARP list was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Commissioner Loudermilk, and passed unanimously.

F. **Surplus Property Issues.** Danny Bridges, County Manager, said that on the property the County purchased for the Northwest Business Park, there is a double-wide modular home on same; that the County considered using it but determined that it would not serve our needs; that it is being requested that the trailer be declared surplus and take bids on same; that a resolution will have to be

prepared and approved and the item advertised for sale as surplus property; and that we probably won't get very much for it. In addition, he said that there are automobiles and equipment that need to be declared surplus in order to advertise for sealed bids or auction. Consensus was to move forward with preparing the appropriate documents for surplus property.

- G. **Digital Aerial Photography for Tax Assessor.** Danny Bridges, County Manager, said that included in the packets are two photographs, the one that is hard to read is what the County can currently produce and the second is what we could produce if we purchased the digital photography; that the County could produce it in house but could not put in on the internet; and that the cost is \$8,000 and there is \$4,000 in the budget for mapping and the balance can be found within the budget to pay for this service. Wayne Morris, Tax Assessor, said that to have the property flown for our use would cost \$35,000 or more; that this company flies the State every couple years, and they take our property info and overlay it on their maps, which can be used in our GIS system. The motion to approve the purchase of this photography was made by Commissioner Whearley, seconded by Commissioner Loudermilk, and passed with four in favor (Whearley, Loudermilk, Lange, Wyatt) and one opposed (Manning).

- H. **Radio (800 MHZ) Issues.** Danny Bridges, County Manager, said that our 800 MHZ radio system is through Columbus' system and Columbus is moving to a digital radio system; that at the very least, it will cost Harris County \$14,250 to stay on Columbus' system; that the changes will help with the County's dead spots, but decisions are needed as to the level of change; and that he will have a meeting to make sure what is necessary for the County to do, after which he will report to the Board. Discussion included that with this system, we will always be dependent on Columbus; that information will be obtained as to the cost of a stand-alone system; that we have one tower, we bounce off Columbus' two towers, with some changes we could bounce off Troup County's tower that is located in Harris County, and Columbus is going to put in another tower which will give even better coverage, except for the Oak Mountain area; that there will be a cost to upgrade the public safety radios (Sheriff's Office and EMS) that can be reprogrammed, but the radios for Road Maintenance, Facilities Maintenance and Recreation would not have to be upgraded; and that more information will be provided following the next meeting regarding same.

- I. **Bid Award: Ambulance.** Danny Bridges, County Manager, said that we requested bids for a new ambulance for EMS and only one bid was received from Peach State Ambulance for \$155,699; that while there is only one bid, we have had much success with Peach State from whom we have purchased ambulances in the past; and that it is recommended the award be made to Peach State. The motion to award the bid to Peach State Ambulance was made by Commissioner Manning, seconded by Commissioner Wyatt, and passed unanimously.

- J. **Bid Rejection and Rebid: Body Armor.** Danny Bridges, County Manager, said that it is being requested that the bids received for body armor be rejected and the items rebid due to miscommunications and revised specifications. The motion to reject the bids received and rebid the items was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Commissioner Loudermilk, and passed unanimously.

- K. **Bid Award: Fuel Truck for Airport.** Danny Bridges, County Manger, said that bids were requested for a used fuel truck, but that no bids were received.

- L. **Bid Award: Hangar Building for Airport.** Danny Bridges, County Manager, said that bids were received for the construction of the hangar building at the Airport, as follows:

Company	Bid Amount
Carlisle Services, Pine Mountain, GA	\$ 412,700
Jones Construction, Tifton, GA	\$ 397,000
L-J, Inc., Columbia, SC	\$ 425,000

Mr. Bridges said that the recommendation is to award the bid to Jones Construction for \$397,000 with 90% Federal funding, 5% State funding, and 5% County funding. The motion to award the bid to Jones Construction for the amount of \$397,000 was made by Commissioner Manning, seconded by Commissioner Whearley, and passed unanimously.

10. **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

- A. **Resolution: Cable Franchise Fee Increase.** John Taylor, County Attorney, said that the County currently receives franchise fees of 2% from cable companies; that the State recently changed the law to allow companies to go through the State for statewide franchises, and in doing so, counties are permitted to receive franchise fees of up to 5% of the gross revenue generated within the jurisdictions of each county. Discussion included that the higher the franchise fee the County receives, the more the consumer will pay for the cable service; and that if the County does not choose to even receive the 2% from the statewide franchise, it won't get anything. Commissioner Manning tabled action until the August 19 meeting.

11. **OTHER (CONTINUED)**

- E. **NACO Prescription Cards.** Commissioner Whearley asked about the status of the prescription cards from NACO. Nancy McMichael, County Clerk, said that she will check on the status.
- F. **School Tax Exemption.** In response to a question from Commissioner Whearley, John Taylor, County Attorney, said that exemptions regarding the School tax will be on the agenda in November, and that only the School Board, not the County, can request action by State Legislation to approve changes by means of a referendum.

- 12. **ADJOURNMENT.** The motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Commissioner Manning, and passed unanimously.

J. Harry Lange, Chairman

Attest:

Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk