

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION**

April 1, 2014
7:00 P.M.

Commissioners Present: J. Harry Lange, Joey M. Loudermilk, Becky Langston, Jim Woods, Charles Wyatt. Staff Present: Greg Wood, County Manager; John Taylor, County Attorney; Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chairman Lange called the Regular Session to order.
2. **MINUTES.** The motion to approve the minutes of the March 18, 2014, Regular Session, was made by Commissioner Loudermilk, seconded by Commissioner Woods, and passed unanimously.
3. **OLD BUSINESS**
 - A. **Bridge on Fortson Road over Standing Boy Creek.** Chairman Lange said that this had been tabled from the March 18 meeting regarding clarification of the County's commitment to pay for the right of way. Greg Wood, County Manager, said that he had contacted Georgia DOT and learned that no agreement had been signed regarding a commitment to pay approximately \$53,000 for necessary right of way for the project. Following a brief discussion, Mr. Woods was directed to contact GDOT about having a not-to-exceed \$53,000 contract and report back to the Board regarding same.
 - B. **Insurance Broker/Consultant Qualification Results.** Chairman Lange said that this had been tabled from the March 18 meeting in order to determine if a contract had been entered into with the current broker; that such a document cannot be located; and that the Board should move forward with the broker/consultant process. Greg Wood, County Manager, said that several proposals were received; that one stood out above the rest due to availability of information to staff and to the individual employees; that they had set up a website for Harris County to review; that they have a high number of public sector clients; and that MSI Benefits is being recommended to be the County's broker for health insurance. Discussion included that they do not have an office in Columbus, but the visitation schedule and assigned personnel will be on site on a regular basis; and that the list provided show the top three with the balance being in alphabetical order. Chairman Lange said that one person had signed up to speak about this matter.

John Knopf, citizen who lives on Calhoun Road, appeared before the Board and said that he is in the insurance business himself; that his questions are about the broker proposals and what the broker is going to do differently; that people are at the mercy of the insurance companies; that nothing can be done to stop the trend of increases unless there is control; that in his business he has run across creative and innovative approaches to reducing insurance costs to municipalities; that in his opinion, going to market might net a minimum 5% to 10% increase; that every year premiums are going to go up if something differently is not done; and that something needs to be done differently to help the citizens of the County reduce costs. Chairman Lange said that Mr. Knopf's e-mail (sent to each commissioner prior to the meeting) was intriguing and had good thoughts; and agreed that the County does need a broker to do those kind of things. Greg Wood, County Manager, said that the wellness aspect is lacking in our current situation; that the recommended broker (MSI) appears to have better ability to provide access to information; that in the future we may be looking at being self-insured but with the Affordable Healthcare Act, the Board did not feel comfortable going in that direction at this time; and that the recommended broker (MSI) works on a commission basis. Mr. Knopf said that commission is buried in the cost of the premium, whereas a specific fee (such as that of Hutchinson Traylor) is an instant savings to the County; that he strongly recommends a fee based arrangement to know exactly what is being paid to the broker; that his point was to see if the Board could table the decision another week or so and look at the long-term goal of getting the premiums down; and that he hopes MSI has a plan to stop doing it the way everyone else does.

In response to a question from Commissioner Langston, Mr. Knopf said that he is affiliated with Hutchinson Traylor as a property and casualty broker, and not as a health insurance broker. Mr. Wood said that the only differentiation between Hutchinson Taylor and MSI was the fee basis, which made it difficult to determine, and that it was the extra features of MSI which pushed it to the top of the list. Discussion included costs (commission versus fee basis); that other ways should be looked at; that additional conversation is needed; that MSI, with 41 public clients, would have greater negotiation power than the company with only two public clients; and that the broker will not deal with any supplemental insurance. Following

discussion, Mr. Wood said that complete copies of the broker proposals can be made available for the Board; and that he is willing to drop #3 (Strongside Solutions) from the list and move Hutchinson Traylor into the #3 slot due to tonight's discussion.

Following discussion, action was tabled and a Called Meeting was scheduled for Monday, April 7, at 7:00 PM, in the Conference Room of the Commissioners' Office, and that copies of the top three brokers (MSI, Americare, and Hutchinson Traylor) would be made available tomorrow morning (April 2) at 9:00 AM.

- C. **Financial Statement: January 2014.** Chairman Lange said that this had been tabled from the March 18 meeting and asked Commissioner Langston if her questions had been answered, to which Commissioner Langston responded that they had. The motion to approve the January 2014 financial statement was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Commissioner Woods, and passed unanimously.

4. **PUBLIC HEARING @ 7:30 PM**

- A. **Explanation of Public Hearing Procedures.** Chairman Lange explained the procedures involved in the Public Hearing.

- B. **Application of the Board of Commissioners to amend the Zoning Ordinance, Article IV, Section 2, 4(a), to require that notices of Special Use Permit applications be sent to adjacent property owners.** Chairman Lange called the Public Hearing to order, read the specifics of the application, and said that the Planning Commission had recommended approval of the amendment. He said that the amendment is to add a new number 3 to read "provide notification to the abutting property owners as outlined in article X, section 1(c)(c)". Commissioner Langston said that she would like to see such notification sent; that she would also like for the appropriate signage to be posted; and that she would like the Planning Commission to also hold a hearing like they do for rezonings. Discussion included that implementing such would provide better transparency to the public regarding such matters; that the Zoning Act requires only one hearing regarding rezonings, but the County's ordinance requires two rezoning hearings; that the signage should be 48" x 48"; and that requiring these three additional items would put more of a burden on the property owner/citizen. Following discussion and there being no further comments, Chairman Lange asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of the amendments. There being none, he asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition to the amendments. There being none, he closed the Public Hearing and asked for a motion. Commissioner Langston made the motion to amend Article IV, Section 2, 4(a) to include notification to the abutting property owners, to require the applicant to post the appropriate number of signs that are 48" x 48" in size; and to require the Planning Commission to hold a public hearing and make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Woods, and passed with four in favor (Langston, Woods, Lange, Loudermilk) and one opposed (Wyatt).

4. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. **Department of Corrections Agreement: Inmate Capacity at Prison.** At the request of Chairman Lange, John Taylor, County Attorney, reviewed the agreement regarding the 125 inmates at the Prison and said it was basically the same as those approved in the past, pointed out the items regarding inmate medical expenses, and recommended approval. The motion to approve this agreement was made by Commissioner Langston, seconded by Commissioner Loudermilk, and passed unanimously. (Document can be found in "Contracts & Agreements" file as C&A #14-03.)
- B. **Memorandum of Understanding: Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).** At the request of Chairman Lange, John Taylor, County Attorney, reviewed the agreement, said that the MPO is made up of counties in the Columbus area and in Alabama, and that this organization deals only with transportation issues. The motion to approve this MOU was made by Commissioner Loudermilk, seconded by Commissioners Woods, and passed unanimously. (Document can be found in "Contracts & Agreements" file as C&A #14-04.)
- C. **Comprehensive Plan Update: Authorize Chairman to Execute Letter to DCA.** The motion to authorize the Chairman to execute the letter to DCA regarding the Comprehensive Plan Update was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Commissioner Loudermilk, and passed unanimously.
- D. **Review and Revise Zoning, Subdivision and other Land Development Ordinances by the Planning Commission.** Chairman Lange said that a request had been made for the

Planning Commission to review and recommend revisions of the Zoning, Subdivision, and other Land Development Ordinances, and he asked Tracie Hadaway, County Planner, for comments. Mrs. Hadaway said that the Planning Commission had discussed reviewing the various ordinances in order to make sure they are current, do not conflict with each other, and to have all the land development ordinances together so that it is easier for developers and the general public to understand and follow. Discussion included that the Planning Commission's changes/revisions would only be recommendations for the Board to consider; that due to the number of ordinances, the review by the Planning Commission will take some time du; that having the ordinances reviewed has been discussed several times during the past few years but has not come to fruition for various reasons; and that the Board does not have to review/consider them all at once, but as they are done, or even two or three at the time. Following discussion, the motion to having the Planning Commission review the Zoning, Subdivision and other Land Development ordinances and make revisions for consideration by the Board was made by Commissioner Loudermilk, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously.

- E. **Request for Tax Refund: Brenda Kay Bragg.** Chairman Lange said that a refund request had been received from Brenda Kay Bragg in the amount of \$97.50 due to a four-wheeler being titled as a motorcycle. He said that the Tax Commissioner has agreed with the request and has indicated the error has been corrected and the correct title issued. The motion to approve this request was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously.
- F. **Koch/JCG Foods Public Observation Committee.** Chairman Lange said that Commissioner Wyatt had requested this topic be placed on the agenda, and that during March 18 Work Session there were no objections to having the County Manager and the Plant Manager contact each other about issues, with the County Manager reporting back to the Board. He then asked Commissioner Wyatt for comments. Commissioner Wyatt said that he would like to form a committee made up of three members of the Pine Mountain Valley Chamber of Commerce (PMVCOC), the Community Development Director, the Tax Assessor, and the County Manager to keep an eye on what is going on at Koch/JCG Foods. Chairman Lange said that he would prefer that the individuals from PMVCOC meet periodically with the County Manager who could contact the Plant Manager about issues; and that a formal committee doesn't seem appropriate. Following discussion, no motion was made, and Commissioner Wyatt was asked to have the individuals from PMVCOC get in touch with Greg Wood, County Manager from time to time about any issues.

5. **COUNTY MANAGER**

- A. **Tower Site in Northwest Harris Business Park: Dean Ginn.** Dean Ginn, of Dean's Two Way, appeared before the Board regarding the proposed tower site in the Northwest Harris Business Park (NWHBP). He said that the site at West Point's water tank is not conducive for a communications tower, but that property in the northwest corner of the NWHBP is; that the site would allow for a 360' tower; and that there will be three to four months of due diligence before any construction could take place on the site. The motion to move forward with the tower site in the NWHBP, to include the appropriate contracts, was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Commissioner Woods, and passed unanimously.
- B. **Overview of Radio System.** Dean Ginn, of Dean's Two Way, brought the Board up to date on the status of the radio system to include that nine sites are on the air; that there are two more potential sites at Georgia Highway 36 at Georgia Highway 208 and at the Harrisville Compactor Site; that the site at Georgia Highway 36 at Georgia Highway 208 is owned by Verizon, but that the County can co-locate on it at no cost, other than a one-time \$5,000 fee; and that he will be at the Fire Chiefs meeting on Thursday night to bring them up to date on the system. Discussion included that if the County were to construct a tower, it would cost at least \$250,000, so the \$5,000 one-time fee is very reasonable;
- C. **Bid Award: Ridgeway Road.** Greg Wood, County Manager, said that the County requested bids for the 178.93 acres of property on Ridgeway Road. The bids received are as follows:

| BIDDER NAME | BID AMOUNT |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Carlisle, Thomas | \$ 222,000.00 |
| Kosmo Farms, LLC | \$ 360,000.00 |
| McCardle, William | \$ 163,363.09 |
| Terrell, Brad | \$ 178,931.00 |

Mr. Wood said that the recommendation is to award the bid to Kosmo Farms, LLC, with the high bid of \$360,000. The motion to award the bid to Kosmo Farms LLC for the bid of \$360,000 was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Commissioner Loudermilk, and passed unanimously.

- D. **Bid Award: Pate Park Tennis Courts.** Greg Wood, County Manager, said that the County requested bids for the completion (cleaning, crack fill, leveling, color coating, striping, and concrete foundations) of the existing double tennis courts at Pate Park. The bids received are as follows:

| BIDDER NAME | BID AMOUNT |
|--|--------------|
| Advanced Athletic Surfaces, Augusta, GA | \$ 11,890.00 |
| ChemSeal Asphalt Maintenance, Columbus, GA | \$ 8,200.00 |
| Competition Athletic Surfaces, Chattanooga, TN | \$ 23,500.00 |

Mr. Wood said that the recommendation is to award the bid to ChemSeal of Columbus, GA, for the low bid of \$8,200.00. The motion to award the bid to ChemSeal for the low bid of \$8,200.00 was made by Commissioner Langston, seconded by Commissioner Woods, and passed unanimously.

- E. **Bid Award: Parallel Taxiway Crackseal.** Greg Wood, County Manager, said that the County requested bids for the parallel taxiway crackseal at the Airport, and that only one bid was received from Wall Asphalt of Villa Rica, Georgia, for the bid of \$21,350. Discussion included that the bid was properly advertised in the local newspaper, on the County’s website, and on ACCG’s marketplace website in addition to being mailed to several firms. Following discussion, the motion to award the bid to Wall Asphalt of Villa Rica for the bid of \$21,350 was made by Commissioner Woods, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed with four in favor (Woods, Langston, Lange, Loudermilk) and one opposed (Wyatt).

- F. **Bid Award: Barn Contents.** Greg Wood, County Manager, said that the County requested bids for the contents of the barn on the County’s property in Ellerslie, and that only one bid was received from Nancy McMichael, County Clerk, in the amount of \$25.00. Discussion included that no one other than Mrs. McMichael and Brian Williams, Community Development Director, attended the mandatory pre-bid meeting; that the bid was properly advertised in the local newspaper, on the County’s website, and on ACCG’s marketplace website; that at least two other people requested the bid package; that awarding the bid to Mrs. McMichael may appear to be improper; that there is no ordinance prohibiting a county employee or the bid manager from submitting a bid; that the items in the barn might be worth about \$100; that there were two witnesses to Mrs. McMichael submitting the bid and the bid being opened. Commissioner Wyatt initially made the motion to award the bid to Mrs. McMichael for \$25, but withdrew same following discussion. He then made the motion to just give Mrs. McMichael the contents of the barn, which failed for lack of a second. The motion to award the bid to Mrs. McMichael for the bid of \$25 was made by Commissioner Woods, seconded by Commissioner Loudermilk, and passed with four in favor (Woods, Loudermilk, Lange, Wyatt) and one opposed (Langston).

- G. **TIA Signs from GDOT.** Greg Wood, County Manager, said that signs are available from Georgia Department of Transportation indicating that Tia Funds were used to fund a specific project; that such signs can be purchased at a cost of \$40.26 per sign plus \$15.40 per T-post, for a total of \$55.66 per sign; and suggested that three to five pairs would be needed for the County. Discussion included that “River Valley” on the sign could be removed, but that it is not known if it could be replaced by “Harris County” since citizens won’t know that “River Valley” is the region in which Harris County is located. Mr. Wood was directed to contact GDOT about replacing “River Valley” with “Harris County” and report back during the April 22 meeting.

- H. **CDBG Change Order: EMC Engineering.** Greg Wood, County Manager, said that a change order regarding the Scope of Work on the CDBG Kings Gap project had been received from the engineering firm; that the additional work includes construction staking to include clearing limits, slope staking for the entire roadway, rough stake the centerline, staking all storm structures at \$20,000, and limited construction materials testing to include proof rolling of subgrade, density testing for pipe crossing, and density testing for GABC base at \$7,500, for a total of \$27,500; and that the extra cost for the roadway could come from T-SPLOST. Following discussion, Mr. Wood was directed to contact the River Valley Regional Commission about the change and report back during the April 22 meeting.

6. **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

A. **Ante Litem Notice**. John Taylor, County Attorney, said that the County had received an Ante Litem Notice regarding an vehicle accident on June 25, 2013, in which an individual died; that the relatives of the deceased are claiming the County was at fault for various reasons; and that he recommended the Board deny the claim. The motion to deny the claim was made by Commissioner Loudermilk, seconded by Commissioner Wyatt, and passed unanimously.

7. **RECESS FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION**. The motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussion real estate acquisition and personnel issues was made at 8:50 PM by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously.

8. **RESUME REGULAR SESSION**. The motion to go back into Regular Session was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Chairman Lange, and passed unanimously.

9. **PERSONNEL ISSUES**

A. **Public Works/Roads Department**. The motion to move the funding from one Heavy Equipment Operator slot to fund the Roads Supervisor/Heavy Equipment Operator slot, which was unfunded for FY 13/14, and to promote Michael Brown into the Roads Supervisor slot with a 5% increase was made by Chairman Lange, seconded by Commissioner Wyatt, and passed unanimously.

B. **Prison**. The motion to change two part-time Counselor slots to one full-time Counselor slot was made by Chairman Lange, seconded by Commissioner Wyatt, and passed unanimously.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**. There being no further business to discuss, the motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Commissioner Loudermilk, and passed unanimously.

J. Harry Lange, Chairman

Attest:

Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk