

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR SESSION**

June 17, 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 June 3, 2014, Regular Session, was made by Commissioner Loudermilk, seconded by Commissioner Woods, and passed unanimously.

3. **APPEARANCE OF CITIZENS**

A. **Ken Thomas: Portable Signs and Restrictions.** Ken Thomas, citizen, appeared before the Board and said that he has just opened a new sign shop; that he understands the County is cracking down on portable signs; that he counted at least 17 such signs along Highway 27; that such signs are the Volunteer Fire Departments and the VFW; that other counties allow such signs as long as they don't interfere with driving visibility; that Muscogee County has an annual tax on such signs; and that he is concerned because most of his business will involve such portable signs. Greg Wood, County Manager, said that technically, the signs are not permitted even though many exist; that a sign ordinance is being drafted to address all signs and to provide better, more definitive directions for citizens; and that Mr. Thomas might want to be involved with the process. Commissioner Langston said that the Planning Commission will be discussing the sign ordinance during their June 18 meeting, which will take place at 7:00 PM in the Commission Chambers.

B. **Ann Bacher: Thanks.** Ann Bacher, citizen and Hamilton Councilperson, appeared before the Board to thank not only this Board but the past Boards for the various recreational opportunities that have been and are being afforded to the citizens of Harris County, particularly the Community Center, and for the library service; and concluded by saying that she hopes the Board will consider the new library as its next big project so that citizens can park at the Community Center, use the recreation facilities inside, and go to the library planned for construction nearby, and suggested that tennis courts and raised garden beds be considered as well.

C. **Lisa Culpepper: Various Items.** Lisa Culpepper, citizen, appeared before the Board to discuss various issues. Mrs. Culpepper said that she received her tax assessment with an increase to the Fair Market Value of her property in the amount of \$19,047; and that she checked parcels around her property on the Tax Assessor's public website and found no changes for any of the surrounding properties, nor any changes for anyone sitting on the Board of Appeals or the Board of Commissioners. Chairman Lange said that the Board of Commissioners does not handle tax assessments, and that such should go through the Tax Assessors office. Mrs. Culpepper said that some parts involve getting to the Tax Assessor's office. Chairman Lange said that if there are things that involve the Tax Assessor's office, she should talk to Mr. Wood about those. Mrs. Culpepper said that she would get with Wayne Morris.

Mrs. Culpepper then said that she worked for Harris County for almost nine years, with the most recent being in the Board of Commissioners' office; that she worked for the late Danny Bridges who said on more than one occasion that the most valuable asset Harris County has is its employees and their dedicated service; that with an average of 285 employees per payroll run, that those 285 persons probably know 50 people each, and as a result employees could possibly reach 14,500 voters, which are to whom the Board of Commissioners answer as elected officials. She said that during the past year she has seen many changes that are not for the betterment of the County; that the Board of Commissioners should make themselves more involved with the daily office that represents the Board, their decisions, and their reputation to County voters; for example, that unless resolved within the past week, the County is

facing a penalty from the Georgia Employment Tax Office of \$10,000 simply because the finance office did not submit the G7 report for quarter ending 2013 on time; that she knows this for a fact because she wrote the penalty waiver request and read it to Mrs. McMichael in her (Culpepper's) office. Chairman Lange said that is still being worked on.

Mrs. Culpepper said that the financial statements the Board has been receiving for months are not accurate because none of the pension benefits, workers compensation, and property and casualty insurance costs have been billed out to Solid Waste or Water Works since December or possibly longer. She said that the County Manager asked her if he should get with the Finance Office on filing the June quarter information on the due date of the filing of those reports after hearing her remind Mrs. McMichael that they were due; and that she has her doubts that they were correctly reported as she was never asked for the instructions.

Mrs. Culpepper said that the Board needs to look at employee turn-over in departments; that large employee turn-over is a grading scale for management, especially with employees with years of service.

Mrs. Culpepper said that "before the roses stop blooming", the Board needs to wake up and take the time to smell them; and that she would see them at the next meeting and meetings to follow until all of her concerns are presented.

Commissioner Wyatt asked about the tax assessment increase and Mrs. Culpepper said that when she talked to Jay Shuff (in the Tax Assessor's office), she was told they were aware of a coding error; and if there is a coding error, why is something not being done. Greg Wood, County Manager, said that 608 small parcels in the County were reassessed due to the correction of the coding error, with Mrs. Culpepper's property among them. Chairman Lange said that the Board can't get into the reasons of the assessment; that it is handled through the Tax Assessor's office; and that he is not saying it should not be looked at, but it can't be done in this meeting.

#### 4. **OLD BUSINESS**

- A. **Financial Statement: April 2014.** Chairman Lange said that this was tabled from the last meeting due to the absence of the SPLOST and Small Funds information; and that that information had been sent to the Board earlier today. He then tabled action until the July 1 meeting.
- B. **Radio System Update.** In response to a question from Commissioner Langston, Greg Wood, County Manager, said that the installation of radios in the Sheriff's vehicles should be started in July with everyone being operational August 1; that the dispatchers have had training sessions; and that the Volunteer Fire Departments are having a level of frustration due to the system they have (VHF) with outdated equipment, but it is hoped that will be resolved soon.
- C. **Koch/JCG Foods.** In response to a question from Commissioner Wyatt, Greg Wood, County Manager, said that he has had no luck in obtaining the contact name and phone number of the new Plant Manager at Koch/JCG Foods; that he has checked with several individuals. At Commissioner Wyatt's request, Scott Moye, citizen, came forward to present the name and contact information of the new Plant Manager. Mr. Wood said that he did visit the plant and there are erosion control fences up, and that part of the trash problem is due to the trailer park across the street. Commissioner Wyatt said that grass is dying from the run-off from the parking lot; that the night the Koch representatives were present, promises were made; that the truck horns are still being blown 24 hours a day; that the frozen trucks, when leaving, leave a trail of bloody water, particularly at the traffic light in Hamilton (at the north intersection of US Highway 27 and Georgia Highway 116). Discussion included that the frozen truck issues have not previously been discussed; that the dying grass has not been previously discussed; that if problems persist, they need to be dealt with; that every time anyone calls at EPD or the Department of Agriculture, they are stopped; that a

source at EPD indicated the topic was too political; that law enforcement has control under Motor Carrier Compliance; that action could be filed to abate a nuisance; and that Community Development and/or the Health Department could issue citations for violations of sanitary standards laws. Consensus was to follow up on what can be done about the trucks. Commissioner Wyatt also said that something should be done about the (north) intersection of US Highway 27 and Georgia Highway 116 in Hamilton.

## 5. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Budget FY 14/15 Public Hearing II.** Chairman Lange called the Public Hearing to order and said that this is the second of two Public Hearings, and he asked Greg Wood, County Manager, for discussion. Mr. Wood said that the changes made during the first Public Hearing had been made and he briefly reviewed same to include \$180,000 for a garbage truck for Solid Waste; no increase in garbage assessment fees; a part-time slot (24 hours) at the Transfer Station for recycling and Community Service; an increase in fees for Water Works to help cover capital expenditures; a revision to fuel purchases at the Airport, which will be balanced out by the sales; no changes to the Small Funds; no vehicles for the Sheriff's Office have been included, as four will be purchased from SPLOST with another possibly from the current year's remaining funds; two vehicles for EMS will be purchased from SPLOST as well; salary increases for Library staff (the same as for County employees of 3%); \$27,000 for another Assistant District Attorney, for which the District Attorney will provide the first six month's salary in the same amount; and the required funding to the Health Department, in the amount of \$250,000, which has been the same for the past six years. In response to a question from the Sheriff, the Board said there is a commitment for the five vehicles. Chairman Lange asked if anyone wished to make comments on the budget. There being none, he closed the Public Hearing.
- B. **Budget FY 14/15 Adoption.** The motion to approve the budgets (General Funds, Solid Waste, Water Works, Airport, and Small Funds) with the changes discussed was made by Commissioner Woods, and seconded by Commissioner Wyatt. Commissioner Loudermilk said that because of his appointment as Juvenile Court Judge, he has a conflict with the budgets of the Assistant District Attorney, Superior Court, and Court Services, and will abstain, therefore, from voting on those three budgets, but will affirmatively vote on the remaining budgets. The motion to approve passed unanimously.
- C. **Appointments/Reappointments.** Chairman Lange said that several appointments or reappointments are needed on several boards, committees, or authorities, as follows:
- (1) **Family and Children Services.** The term of Lillie Williams expires June 30, she has consented to reappointment, and DFACS has requested that she be reappointed to another term, which will expire June 30, 2019.
  - (2) **Valley Partnership Joint Development Authority.** The terms of Harry Boyd and Ben Williams expired May 30, 2014, and both have consented to reappointment for another term, which will expire May 30, 2018. Greg Wood, County Manager, should be appointed to complete the term of Danny Bridges, which would also expire May 30, 2018.
  - (3) **Water Bill Assistance Committee.** The terms of Steve Morgan, Roger Smith, and John Britt have expired, and all three have consented to reappointment. The new terms will expire as follows: Mr. Morgan - May 31, 2015; for Mr. Smith - May 31, 2016; and for Mr. Britt - May 31, 2017.

The motion to approve all appointments or reappointments as discussed was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Commissioner Loudermilk, and passed unanimously.

- (4) Housing Authority and Mental Health Developmental Disabilities & Addictive Diseases Board. Chairman Lange said that Claudette Boelter, who serves on the Housing Authority and on the Mental Health Developmental Disabilities & Addictive Diseases Board (of the Region 6 Board for the Department of Behavioral Health & Development Disabilities) notified the Commissioners' office that she will be moving out of the County, thus vacating her positions on those two boards. He then asked that the Commissioners come up with an individual or individuals to serve on the two boards. Nancy McMichael, County Clerk, said that once she has been notified of possible nominees, she will place the topic on the appropriate agenda for action.

6. **COUNTY MANAGER**

- A. **Change Order #3: Southeastern Site Development**. Greg Wood, County Manager, said that Phil Eberly, of WK Dickson, was present to discuss the change order. Mr. Eberly said that the change order is in the amount of \$17,350 and is for additional paving to connect the Jumbo T-Hangar apron to the planned Corporate Hangar apron. Discussion included that the portion of the additional paving that applies to the corporate hangar is to be included in the lease payments of the owner of the corporate hangar. The motion to approve Change Order #3 was made by Commissioner Woods, seconded by Chairman Lange, and passed unanimously. (Document can be found in "Contracts & Agreements" as C&A #14-13.)
- B. **Supplemental Agreement #1: Wall Asphalt**. Greg Wood, County Manager, said that additional cracks have been identified that need to be addressed while the other cracks are being done. Phil Eberly, of WK Dickson, said this is a supplemental agreement, rather than a change order, because the work hasn't yet started; that this agreement is for sealing of an additional 10,000 linear feet, with a total value of \$5,500. Following discussion, the motion to approve was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Commissioner Woods, and passed unanimously. (Document can be found in "Contracts & Agreements" as C&A #14-14.)
- C. **Fly-In at Harris County Airport**. Chairman Lange said that a Fly-In was held at the Airport on Saturday, June 14, which is an opportunity to get planes and flying clubs to come to the Airport, see what we have, and purchase fuel; that he understands approximately 60 aircraft visited, which is a good turn out; that he heard a lot of favorable comments while he was there; that Pine Mountain Volunteer Fire Department served food for donations; that EMS was present showing off their equipment; and that plans are to have more fly-ins in the future.
- D. **Consulting Engineer Services**. Greg Wood, County Manager, said that with the upturn in property development, there is a need for engineer services; that he would like to suggest that Farner Barley be utilized as needed to review subdivision plans; and that he would obtain a proposal from Farner Barley for the services, which would include their fees for same. There were no objections, but there was a brief discussion regarding budgeting for same, to which Mr. Wood said that a new schedule of permit fees would also be brought to the Board at the next meeting for consideration and possible action. Commissioner Loudermilk asked that fees of counties comparable to Harris County be provided as well.
- E. **Plans Examiner Services**. Greg Wood, County Manager, said that in conjunction with property development, there are times when plans must be reviewed, when Mike Rucker, the County's only certified plans examiner, is not available; that he would like to suggest Bill Duck be utilized as needed for such; and that he would obtain a proposal from Mr. Duck for his services, which would include his fees for same. There were no objections.
- F. **Hamilton Business Park Sign**. Greg Wood, County Manager, said that the Board, during the June 3 meeting, requested that more quotes be obtained regarding the sign for the Hamilton Business Park; that quotes were requested from four sign companies in Harris County, but only one response was received from Fleetwood Signs who gave

three options for the sign. Discussion included that Option A, using 6" cast aluminum letters, at a cost of \$5,932.62 was preferable. The motion to approve Option A was made by Commissioner Wyatt, seconded by Commissioner Woods, and passed unanimously. Regarding the type of sign, the motion to approve the sign with the County's logo at the top of the sign, and to reverse the colors, was made by Commissioner Langston, seconded by Commissioner Loudermilk, and passed unanimously.

G. **SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats)**. Greg Wood, County Manager, said that he has been working with the Chamber of Commerce to have a SWOT analysis done and that has been scheduled for 5:30 PM on September 11. He said that once that is done, the results will be brought to the Board. In response to a question from Commissioner Langston, Mr. Wood said there will be no cost to the County for the analysis.

H. **Bridges and Road Resurfacing**. Greg Wood, County Manager, said that Sastry & Associates will soon have the bid package for the bridge work done soon, and at the next meeting, he will have the list of roads to be resurfaced for the Board to prioritize to include some of those roads with the bridge work.

I. **Senior Center Director**. Greg Wood, County Manager, informed the Board that Belle Walker, Director of the Senior Center, is retiring August 8, and the new Director will be Paula Walker, who will start July 7.

7. **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

A. **Ante-litem Notice: Christina Wood and Brandon Wood**. John Taylor, County Attorney, said that the Board had received an Ante-litem Notice, which is required by State law to be given before a suit can be filed; that this Notice is in regard to an accident that occurred December 10, 2013; that the allegations against Harris County are somewhat vague; that the accident occurred between two Harris County School buses at the end of the day, where one rear-ended the other at an approximate speed of 20 mph; that the parents of two children on one of the buses are claiming the children suffered dental and/or medical problems as a result; that on-scene treatment was performed by EMS and fire department personnel; and that he recommended the Board deny the Ante-litem Notice of any claim against Harris County. He said if denied, he will notify the attorney of the family that the claim has been denied and he will notify ACCG about the potential claim. The motion to deny the Ante-litem Notice was made by Commissioner Loudermilk, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously.

8. **REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION**. Greg Wood, County Manager, requested an Executive Session for the purpose of discussing real estate acquisition.

9. **RECESS FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION**. The motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing real estate acquisition was made at 8:35 PM by Chairman Lange, seconded by Commissioner Woods, and passed unanimously.

10. **RESUME REGULAR SESSION**. The motion to resume the Regular Session was made by Chairman Lange, seconded by Commissioner Wyatt, and passed unanimously.

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

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J. Harry Lange, Chairman

Attest:

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Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk