

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION**

June 2, 2015

7:00 P.M.

Commissioners Present: J. Harry Lange, Martha Chewning, Becky Langston, Jim Woods. Commissioner Absent: Joey Loudermilk. Staff Present: Greg Wood, County Manager; John Taylor, County Attorney; Sherrail Jarrett, Acting Secretary in the absence of Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chairman Lange called the Regular Session to order.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** Chairman Lange led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **MINUTES.** The motion to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2015, Regular Session with a change in the last paragraph of item 5B to clarify that the survey is to be for that portion of the 5.01 acre tract bounded on the west by the Hamilton Cemetery Association, the north and east by the city of Hamilton, and the south by homes that front Barnes Mill Road, was made by Commissioner Woods, seconded by Commissioner Chewning, and passed unanimously.
4. **APPEARANCE OF CITIZENS**
 - A. **David Taylor: Washington Road Status.** David Taylor, citizen, appeared before the Board to discuss the status of the paving of Washington Road. Mr. Taylor thanked the Board for the progress made thus far on the paving of Washington Road and asked where things stand at this point. Greg Wood, County Manager, said that later tonight a request will be made to contract with an engineering firm regarding the road, particularly in the section near Johnson Mill Road; that he has talked to Georgia Power who has indicated about 90 to 120 days to move poles and requested a 15' easement behind the power poles, but plans are to locate the power poles in the 60' right of way; and that only one land owner has not yet come to terms with the project. Discussion included that negotiations with that one land owner will not hold up the project; and that if all goes well, paving should be completed by the end of October.
5. **OLD BUSINESS**
 - A. **Computers for Sheriff's Vehicles.** Chairman Lange said that while approval was made at the last meeting to pay the invoices (totaling \$109,477) for the computers and installation, the Board had not yet determined from where the funds should be taken. Following discussion, which included comments from the Sheriff, the motion to use funds from the Drug Abuse Treatment Program was made by Commissioner Woods, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously.
 - B. **Troup County Work Release Issue Related to Koch Foods.** Sheriff Jolley appeared before the Board regarding the recent work release issue and said that an individual failed to get on the transportation bus to go back to Troup County from Koch Foods; that the person has worked at Koch for 11 months; that the person lives at the Troup County Transitional Center; that Harris County was notified three days after the incident; that even though Harris County was notified, a warrant had to be issued; that the warrant was issued Monday, at which time County personnel started searching; and that the search continued the next morning. Greg Wood, County Manager, said that the County did everything right, and this is an opportunity for citizens to make sure they are signed up for Code Red, which is utilized to send out alerts about such issues. In response to a question, Sheriff Jolley said that the person is still at large. Sheriff Jolley is to come back at the June 16 meeting to further discuss this matter.
 - C. **SPLOST Update.** In response to a question from Commissioner Langston, Greg Wood, County Manager, said that the SPLOST update is pending a financial report that affects the audit and funding, which includes SPLOST, and hopefully, he should have the report at the June 16 meeting.
6. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. **Financial Statement: April 2015.** The motion to approve the financial statement for April, which incorporates February and March as well, was made by Commissioner Woods, and seconded by Chairman Lange. Commissioner Langston asked about overage for travel and school in Department 8 (EMS), and Greg Wood, County Manager, said that reimbursement for three EMTs to Paramedic had been made, which will no longer be done, and that an

amendment will be necessary. Commissioner Langston also asked Department 32 (Recreation) the \$700,000 shown as an expense, and Mr. Wood said that \$700,000 was for the purchase of Ellerslie Park and was carried forward. Paul Glick, Finance Officer, said that the \$700,000 had been included in the January financial, so he included it in this one as well. Commissioner Langston tabled action on the April financial statement until a corrected version is available.

- B. **Bid Award: Taxiway Relocation.** Greg Wood, County Manager, said that bids were received for the Airport Taxiway Relocation, as follows:

COMPANY	BID
Alexander Contracting, Fortson, GA	\$ 2,771,753.80
Lewis Contracting Services, Atlanta, GA	\$ 3,460,814.67
McCoy Grading, Greenville, GA	\$ 2,953,779.38
Robinson Paving, Columbus, GA	\$ 3,128,860.60
Southeastern Site Development, Newnan, GA	\$ 2,809,258.75

Mr. Wood said that the bids have been reviewed by WK Dickson, Airport Consultant, and has recommended that the bid be awarded to Alexander Contracting. The motion to award the bid to Alexander Contracting for the low bid of \$2,771,753.80 was made by Commissioner Woods, seconded by Commissioner Chewning, and passed unanimously.

7. **COUNTY MANAGER**

- A. **Sheriff's Substation / Trailhead: Ellerslie Park.** Greg Wood, County Manager, said that in moving forward with Ellerslie Park, plans are to have a trailhead for people to ride bicycles and the possibility of having a Sheriff's precinct in the area; that plans were to have the Sheriff's substation within the Park, but that the Sheriff prefers having it at the corner of SR 315 and SR 85 for better visibility; that it is proposed to request design build plans in one package, which will be more cost effective in the long run; that plans are for a 20' x 24' building with two 12' x 12' offices, restrooms for deputies, an outside restroom for public access at the trailhead, a small pavilion with picnic tables and bike racks, and security cameras on the building corners; that work on the Lodge should begin soon; and that both projects should be completed by the end of summer. Following discussion, which included that the approximate cost for the substation should be less than \$100,000, the motion to approve requesting design build plans for the Sheriff's substation was made by Commissioner Chewning, seconded by Commissioner Woods, and passed unanimously.
- B. **Engineering for Washington Road.** Greg Wood, County Manager, said that due to the need for engineering on Washington Road due to curves and other issues, he is requesting authorization to engage EMC Engineering, who performed the preliminary survey work and road layout, at an approximate cost of \$35,000, not including inspection, with the cost to come from SPLOST. The motion to authorize engaging EMC Engineering was made by Commissioner Chewning, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously.

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

- A. **Explanation of Public Hearing Procedures.** Chairman Lange explained the procedures involved for the Special Use Permit Public Hearing.
- B. **Completion of Conflict of Interest Forms.** The Conflict of Interest forms were completed at the request of Chairman Lange.
- C. **Application of Samuel Rhodes for a Special Use Permit for an Ag Horse Facility on 15.32 acres in Land Lots 15 & 28, Land District 17, Map 017, Parcel 008B; property located at 6350 Georgia Highway 219, Fortson; present use Ag Horse Facility; proposed use Ag Horse Facility.** Chairman Lange called the Public Hearing to order, read the specifics of the application, and said that the Planning Commission and County Planner had recommended approval of the application. Samuel Rhodes, applicant, appeared before the Board and said equine activities are currently taking place at the 6388 Georgia Highway 219 address; that their goal is to expand the program and utilize the property at 6350 Georgia Highway 219 for that purpose; that Warrior Outreach was started in 2008 and support has grown throughout the County and the State; and that 7,831 veterans and their families utilized the program in 2014. There being no questions from the Board, Chairman Lange asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of this application.

Linda Ames, representing the Daughters of the American Revolution, Columbus Chapter, appeared before the Board and said that on behalf of the Chapter, they appreciate what Sgt. Major Rhodes is doing and fully support the application.

Kathy Rhodes, wife of Samuel Rhodes, appeared before the Board and said that it is very rewarding to give back to those who have given so much for our country; and that they would like to continue and expand their operation to allow other veterans to participate in the program.

Ronnie Wagner of Phenix City, Alabama, appeared before the Board and said that Warrior Outreach gives soldiers and their families opportunities to interact with horses; and that the programs build relationships for soldiers with other soldiers.

Kristina Wagner of Phenix City, Alabama, appeared before the Board and said that she is the daughter of a veteran and married to a veteran; that people don't understand what soldiers have gone through; that Warrior Outreach has been amazing to help spouses and families better understand and deal with the various effects of what the soldiers have undergone.

Jeff Bellinger, who lives on Holland Road, appeared before the Board and said that he is in support of the application; that he has helped build some of the structures at the adjacent property; that there are many involved with Warrior Outreach who are not veterans; that the program touches all aspects of the community from kids, families, veterans, and others; and that he fully supports the program.

Charlie White of Columbus, Georgia, appeared before the Board and said that he directs the Columbus Training Center, in Bibb City; that Sgt. Major Rhodes supports the Columbus Training Center; that the Center provides Sgt. Major Rhodes with the names of veterans or their widows for him to contact to determine their needs; that everything Sgt. Major Rhodes does is first class; that there is ample parking for his program; and that he fully supports the application.

Captain Roy Valdez of Fort Benning, Georgia, appeared before the Board and said that the Warrior Outreach program gives much to the community; that he believes in what the program does; that it helps to improve the quality of life for veterans; and that he fully supports the program and the application.

Bill Ellison, an accountant of Columbus, Georgia, appeared before the Board and said that Warrior Outreach is one of his clients; that the Warrior Outreach program is very impressive; that about 80 to 90 percent of donations go directly to the program; and that he fully supports the program and the application.

There being no further comments in favor of the application, Chairman Lange asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition. There being none, he asked Sgt. Major Rhodes if he had any closing comments. Sgt. Major Rhodes thanked everyone who spoke and those in attendance.

Commissioner Langston said that she knows first-hand what Sgt. Major and Mrs. Rhodes do at Warrior Outreach; that she is proud to have the program in District 3; that the organization is phenomenal and urged the other Commissioners to vote in favor of the Special Use Permit.

Chairman Lange said thanked Sgt. Major Rhodes for what his program does and what he does for the soldiers and veterans; and said that the Sgt. Major and his wife are selfless individuals and will give help to those in need.

Commissioner Woods said that the Special Use Permit application is for an Ag Horse facility and asked if the permit only allows the Ag Horse facility and not extend to other uses in the same matrix item (auditoriums, arenas, auctions), and Tracie Hadaway, County Planner, said that the use is specific to what is listed on the application.

There being no further comments, Chairman Lange closed the Public Hearing and asked for a motion.

The motion to approve this Special Use Permit application for an Ag Horse facility was made by Commissioner Langston, seconded by Commissioner Chewning, and passed unanimously.

9. **NEW BUSINESS (CONTINUED)**

C. **Budget FY 15/16 Public Hearing I.** Chairman Lange said that this is the first of two public hearings on the FY 15/16 Budget; that several cuts had been made to the budget requests in order to maintain the current existing millage rate; and that at this time there is no proposed increase in the millage rate. Discussion included that the amount is the telephone line for Department 8 (EMS) should be reduced from \$8,200 to \$7,200, which is what the department head requested; that Department 28 (Community Center) appears to have an increase of \$11,000 but the bottom line appears to show an increase closer to \$28,000 which is apparently due to gas, irrigation, and water & sewer. There being no further comments or questions from the Board, Chairman Lange asked if there were any comments or questions from those in attendance. There being none, he closed the Public Hearing and said that another Public Hearing will take place on June 16, after which a vote will be taken regarding same.

10. **COUNTY MANAGER (CONTINUED)**

C. **Front Door Initiative.** Greg Wood, County Manager, said that he had received information from the River Valley Regional Commissioner (RVRC) regarding possible funding for technical assistance and training to help the County's "curb appeal", and he asked if there were objections to him responding to same. Following discussion, consensus was for Mr. Wood to email the information to the Board and place same on the next agenda for action.

11. **REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Greg Wood, County Manager, requested an Executive Session for the purpose of discussing land acquisition and a personnel matter.

12. **COUNTY ATTORNEY.** John Taylor, County Attorney, said that he had no business to discuss with the Board this evening.

13. **RECESS FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION.** The motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing land acquisition and personnel matters was made at 8:00 PM by Chairman Lange, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously.

14. **RESUME REGULAR SESSION.** The motion to go back into Regular Session was made by 8:55 PM by Chairman Lange, seconded by Commissioner Chewning, and passed unanimously.

15. **ADJOURNMENT.** There being no further business to discuss, the motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Langston, seconded by Commissioner Chewning, and passed unanimously.

J. Harry Lange, Chairman

Attest:

Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk