

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION**

August 4, 2020
7:00 P.M.

Commissioners Present: Becky Langston, Susan Andrews, Rob Grant, Andrew Zuerner. Commissioners Present (via telephone due to COVID-19): J. Harry Lange. Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk. Staff Present (via telephone): Russell Britt, County Attorney.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chairman Langston called the Regular Session to order.
2. **MINUTES.** The motion to approve the minutes of the July 21, 2020, Regular Session, was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Grant, and passed unanimously.
3. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. **Resolution of Recognition and Tribute to John M. Taylor.** At the request of Chairman Langston, Commissioner Grant read the Resolution regarding John M. Taylor, County Attorney, who retired June 30, 2020, and passed away from COVID-19 on July 25. The motion to approve the Resolution was made by Chairman Langston, seconded by Commissioner Zuerner, and passed unanimously.
 - B. **Mercer Medicine: Use of Old Library Building.** Chairman Langston said that the Board had discussed the use of the old Library building as a medical facility under the direction of the Mercer School of Medicine, and that before negotiations can take place regarding the leasing of the County-owned building, a decision is needed from the Board regarding such use. The motion to approve the use of the old Library building as a medical facility run by the Mercer School of Medicine and to authorize the County Manager and County Attorney to negotiate the lease and/or other legal documents regarding was made by Commissioner Grant and seconded by Commissioner Zuerner. Chairman Langston said that she would like to see a Memorandum of Understanding included in the legal documents. The motion passed unanimously. The final documents are to be brought back before the Board at a future meeting for approval.
4. **COUNTY MANAGER**
 - A. **Community Center Fees: Amend Out of County Resident Fee.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said the Board discussed amending the Community Center out of county resident fee during its recent planning session on July 30; that currently the fee is \$5.00/day/person; and that the amendment is based on the same logic as the County resident fee of: \$5.00/day/person OR a \$5.00 one-time registration fee/person plus \$5.00/ID card fee/person plus \$100.00/person out of county fee, with the card being valid for one year, then a \$50.00/card renewal fee, and if not renewed with 18 months of expiration, the registration process begins anew; and that if approved, the effective date will be August 5, 2020. The motion to amend the out of county resident fee as presented was made by Commissioner Grant, seconded by Commissioner Zuerner, and passed unanimously.
 - B. **Proposal from Sasty & Associates: Barnes Mill Road Bridge Repair.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that a GDOT bridge inspector had inspected the Barnes Mill Road bridge over Palmetto Creek during the summer of 2018, had recommended the bridge be repaired, and recommended that Sastry & Associates be engaged for a bridge repair design; that Sastry & Associates has prepared a proposal to repair the bridge that includes preparation of bid specifications and drawings, removal of lead-based paint and new painting, bidding assistance, attending the pre-bid meeting, construction administration, and coordinating this project with GDOT regarding design compliance, load rating, and sign postings; that the proposal is \$41,971 with an estimated construction cost of \$80,000, for a total project cost of \$121,971; that once the design is completed, the project will be bid out and awarded by the Board with completion expected in March 2021; that funding for this project is not budgeted and will require a budget amendment to the T-SPLOST fund at the bid award phase; and that the City of Hamilton has been requested to fund at least half the cost of the project, but has not yet responded. The motion to approve the proposal at \$41,971 was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously. (Proposal can be found in "Contracts & Agreements" file as C&A #20-18.)
 - C. **Bid Award: Ambulances.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that the SPLOST 2019 funds include \$400,000 for the purchase of two (2) replacement ambulances for EMS; that bids were prepared and advertised; and that three (3) bids were received on July 23 as follows:

	Ambulances (2)	Stryker Stretchers (2)	TOTAL BID	Days for Delivery (after Chassis receipt)
Custom Truck & Body Works, Woodbury GA	\$ 327,080	\$ 38,738	\$ 365,818	90-120
First Class Emergency, Monroe NC	\$ 349,980	\$ 39,610	\$ 389,590	120
ETR, Juliette GA	\$ 388,322	\$ 45,526	\$ 433,848	120

Mr. Dowling said that County staff had evaluated the bids and recommend that Custom Truck & Body Works be awarded the bid for a total of \$365,818, which is \$34,182 (8.5%) below budget; that if approved, the delivery date for the two ambulances is in February 2021; and that once delivered, one of the existing older ambulances will be declared surplus and sold through GovDeals.com, which will result in having four front-line ambulances and three spares. The motion to award the bid to Custom Truck & Body Works for \$365,818 was made by Commissioner Lange, seconded by Commissioner Grant, and passed unanimously.

- D. **Bid Award: Courthouse Outdoor Air Unit Replacement.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that the FY 2020-21 Facilities Maintenance budget includes \$100,000 to install a replacement rooftop outdoor air unit at the County Courthouse; that bids were prepared and advertised; and that two (2) bids were received on July 28, as follows:

	OAU Cost	Five Year Maintenance Cost	TOTAL COST
Comfort Systems USA, Columbus GA	\$ 95,818	\$3,624/year	\$ 99,442.00
T&D Mechanical, Columbus GA	\$ 97,767	\$2,174.60/year	\$ 99,941.60

Mr. Dowling said that County staff had evaluated the bids and recommend that Comfort Systems USA be awarded the bid for a total cost of \$99,442, which is \$448 (0.56%) below budget. Commissioner Zuerner made the motion to award the bid to T&D Mechanical, whose owner lives in Harris County, even though their business address is in Columbus. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Grant. Following discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

- E. **Bid Award: Garbage Trucks.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that the FY 2020-21 Solid Waste Fund budget includes \$400,000 for the purchase of two (2) replacement 20 CY garbage trucks; that bids were prepared and advertised; and that four (4) bids were received on July 23, as follows:

Company	Cab & Chassis	Compactor Body	Delivery Date (Days)	Total Bid (2 Trucks)
Georgia Kenworth, Mableton GA	2021 Kenworth T370	Heil PT-1000	90-120	\$ 321,388.00
Four Star Freightliner, Montgomery AL	2021 Freightliner M2 106	2020 New Way Cobra 20 CY	180-210	\$ 327,652.00
Peterbilt of Atlanta, Jackson GA	2021 Peterbilt 348	2020 New Way Cobra 20 CY	200	\$ 333,847.34
Crane Carrier Co, New Philadelphia OH	2021 Crane Carrier	Heil PT-1000	90-120	\$ 447,758.00

Mr. Dowling said that County staff had evaluated the bids and recommend that Peterbilt of Atlanta be awarded the bid for a total of \$333,847.34, which is \$66,152.66 (16.5%) below budget; that this company is the only company that meet all bid specs for the chassis and compactor body; that if approved, the two new trucks should be delivered in December 2020; and that once delivered, two of the existing older trucks will be declared surplus and sold through GovDeals.com, which will result in having six front-line garbage trucks and five spares. The motion to award the bid to Peterbilt of Atlanta for \$333,847.34 was made by Commissioner Lange, seconded by Commissioner Zuerner, and passed unanimously.

- F. **Bid Award: Underground Fuel Storage Tank Removal.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said the FY 2020-21 Public Works budget includes \$25,000 for the removal and disposal of a 10,000 gallon underground gasoline storage tank; that the tank is about 22 years old and no longer needed since the County's fleet of vehicles now use the WEX fuel card system to purchase fuel; that bids were prepared and advertised; and that four (4) bids were received on July 28, as follows:

COMPANY	BID AMOUNT
Georgia Oilmen's Services, Inc., Lawrenceville GA	\$ 12,665
S & ME, Kennesaw GA	\$ 17,600
GEC, Columbus GA	\$ 18,800
ECS Southeast, Marietta GA	\$ 27,690

Mr. Dowling said that County staff had evaluated the bids and recommend that Georgia Oilmen's Services be awarded the bid for a total of \$12,665, which is \$12,335 (49.3%) under budget; that if approved, the project should be completed by October 2020; and that if soil contamination is found, the County will notify EPD to begin the contamination remediation process. The motion to award the bid to Georgia Oilmen's Services for \$12,665 was made by Commissioner Lange, seconded by Commissioner Grant, and passed unanimously.

5. **PUBLIC HEARINGS @ 7:30 PM**

- A. **Conflict of Interest Forms.** The Conflict of Interest forms were completed at the request of Chairman Langston.
- B. **Explanation of Public Hearings.** Chairman Langston explained the Public Hearing procedures.
- C. **Application of Harris County Board of Commissioners to Amend the Matrix of the Zoning Ordinance, Article IV, Section, Page CDA:26, to add Winery to the matrix (as #151).** Chairman Langston called the Public Hearing to order, read the specifics of the application, and said that the Planning Commission had recommended approval (as amended (with the deletion of part “B” and adding parking requirements of 1/300 SF), and that staff had recommended approval. She asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of or in opposition to this zoning text amendment. There being none, she closed the Public Hearing and asked for a motion. The motion to approve this Zoning Text amendment was made by Commissioner Zuerner, seconded by Commissioner Lange, and passed unanimously.
- D. **Application of Five Ears Land Co./Elizabeth Ogie for a Special Use Permit for a Group Home for on 175.18 acres on Map 068, Parcel 015, Land Lot 9, Land District 21, located south of intersection of GA Highway 208 and Harold Williams Road, Hamilton; permitted in A-1; property zoned A-1.** Chairman Langston called the Public Hearing to order, read the specifics of the application, and said that the Planning Commission had recommended disapproval and staff had recommended approval with conditions of (1) maintain minimum wooded buffer of 100' on all sides of the facility site, (2) number of residents shall not exceed twelve (12) girls, (3) residents are limited to girls under the age of 18 (non-adult), and (4) residents shall be under 24-hour supervision/watchful oversight and staff shall be present at all times.

Bob Kidd, representing the applicant, and Gene Weldon, member of the group home board, appeared before the Board.

Mr. Kidd said that many concerns had been raised during the Planning Commission hearing, and he addressed those items to include they propose to have a 150' vegetative/wooded buffer on all sides, a setback of no less than 200', the house site predicated upon perk tests, no disturbance to the creek on the property, no traffic in and out as the girls will be educated and have therapy on site, the girls will only go off site for medical and dental appointments and occasional field trips, no regular deliveries, the girls will be taught by staff and not attend public schools, there will be a limit of 12 girls between the ages of 12-17 with a minimum of two staff for every six girls at all times, no signage at the road to indicate the home is there, a residential type gate and fencing, reduce area to 7 to 8 acres for the Special Use Permit, and the home will probably be 8,000 square feet.

Mr. Weldon reiterated that the girls will not be in the public school system; that there will be little need for public safety to visit the property; that the home is modeled after one that is located in Atlanta; and that there will be very little additional traffic on GA Highway 208. In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Weldon said that security will be handled by the staff, there will be no violate offenders, and 13 months is the normal stay; that there will be no security guards, at least to start; that the Sheriff is not concerned about someone coming to the County to try to get any of the girls; that the girls are assigned by the Department of Juvenile Justice and possibly DFACS; that they will operate using some state funds, but the difference will be made up from donations; that they will not accept any girls who have special education needs; and that there are certain filters in place regarding the placement of the girls.

There being no further comments or questions from the Board, Chairman Langston asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of this Special Use application. There being none, she asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition to the application.

James Boykin, citizen who lives on Harold Williams Road, appeared before the Board and said that he is concerned about what the 8,000 square foot facility could be used for if this is approved and in five years it's out of funding; that he is concerned about the future use; and he is against the application. Chairman Langston asked Brian Williams, Community Development Director, to comment about future use, and Mr. Williams said that if approved, the property could only be used for the purpose stated on the application and that if someone wants to do something else with the property, they would have to make application for same.

Jimmy Harper, citizen who lives on GA Highway 208, appeared before the Board and said that a 150' buffer is not enough; that the area is residential in use; that we don't need to be helping the girls from Atlanta; that he can't think of any benefit to the County from this facility; that he doesn't care if the Sheriff is not concerned about someone from Atlanta coming to look for the girls, but he is; that the Board needs to protect its citizens; that girls locked up for 13 months are going to cause problems; that the neighbors don't want to hear sirens all the time; that there is plenty of traffic on GA Highway 208 and more is not needed; that he doesn't think there is anyone who doesn't want to help the girls, but it has to be in the right place; and that the Board should consider if they would like such a facility next to them.

Lennie Moore, citizen who lives on GA Highway 208, appeared before the Board and said that he agrees with the previous speaker, especially about the traffic.

Jenny Eckman, citizen who lives on Harold Williams Road, appeared before the Board and said that Harris County is very generous; that she understands there are to be bars on the windows, four people for security 24/7, counselor, teachers, and others so there will be some traffic; that there have been two bad accidents at the intersection of GA Highway 208 and Harold Williams Road; that there are two other similar homes in the County and a third is not needed; and that she is asking the Board to vote no on this application.

Steve Boykin, citizen who lives on Harold Williams Road, appeared before the Board and said he is concerned about the 175.18 acres; that he doesn't think West Central Georgia Regional Hospital has 175 acres; that there is possible alternate location for sale in the northern part of Muscogee County that is 8,000 square feet and was built for 15 girls and is only 15 minutes from the subject property; and that he would like to Board to vote no on this application.

Tommy Hightower, citizen who lives on Harold Williams Road, appeared before the Board and said that the owner of the property has another large piece of property and he is concerned about having a special use permit on that property.

Christine Harper, citizen who lives on GA Highway 208, appeared before the Board and said that she has children and grandchildren at her home and they like to play in the pool; that she and they would be able to see people going up and down the driveway all the time; that such a facility should not be in a residential area; that she is scared that people will come looking for the girls; and that she doesn't want the facility to be approved.

Cora Moore, citizen who lives on GA Highway 208, appeared before the Board and asked if the home in Atlanta was in a residential neighborhood.

Mark Eckman, citizen who lives on Harold Williams Road, appeared before the Board and said that he is opposed to the application; that he moved to the area for its rural environment; that it will be something else in three or four years; and that it should be put in Columbus.

Arnold Jackson, citizen who lives on GA Highway 208, appeared before the Board and said that the property is zoned A-1 and is mostly residential; and that the facility should be located elsewhere.

There being no further comments in opposition, Chairman Langston asked Mr. Kidd and Mr. Weldon for rebuttal.

Mr. Weldon said that he speaks for the organization for the facility who wish to remain anonymous for privacy; that regarding the placement of the girls, such will be made by Georgia Cares, rather than the Department of Juvenile Justice and DFACS as previously mentioned, and who will make sure the right girls are placed here; that it will be very difficult to see through 150' of vegetation; that there will be no bars on the windows; that the perk tests will determine placement of the home; that he sees the home as a benefit to Harris County; that only about 8 acres would be developed; that this is a way to keep the property residential even though the home will be 8,000 square feet; and that he would never want to be the person who says that the girls need help but let someone else help them.

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

Commissioner Andrews said that this is a noble cause; that she has previously dealt with such children; that the question is if this is the appropriate location for the facility; that the Comprehensive Plan calls for this area to remain agricultural; and she made the motion to disapprove this Special Use application.

Chairman Langston agreed with Commissioner Andrews' comments and said that many times the Board has to deal with making decisions from the head rather than the heart; that while this is a wonderful concept, she is concerned about it being in a residential area; and she seconded the motion to disapprove.

Commissioner Grant asked Mr. Weldon if the facility in Atlanta was in a residential area and Mr. Weldon said it was in a residential/industrial area. Commissioner Andrews asked Mr. Jackson if internet was reliable in the area, and Mr. Jackson said that it is weak. Commissioner Andrews commented that internet is a must in order to receive schooling. Commissioner Zuerner said that this is a hard decision; that he has done a lot of research on this and talked to the Sheriff and EMS; that he travels GA Highway 208 every day; that the road is not near its travel capacity and it will be years before the road is widened; that in reviewing past Commission minutes for the dog kennel in area, there was no mention by anyone that such a business would increase traffic in the area; that while it appears we are turning our backs on the girls, we are adhering to the Comprehensive Plan and the wishes of the residents.

The motion to disapprove this Special Use Permit application passed unanimously.

6. **COUNTY MANAGER (CONTINUED)**

G. **Bid Award: Video Live Stream Equipment.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that the FY 2020-21 Information Technology budget includes \$20,000 to purchase new video and audio equipment for the Commission meeting room in the Courthouse (room 223) in order to live stream public meetings on YouTube and the County’s website; that bids for a two-camera pan/tilt/zoom video system with expansion capabilities, live-stream viewing on YouTube and County’s website, new audio equipment, ability to remote view public meetings on the existing monitors located on each floor of the Courthouse, all back-end equipment such as encoders, racks, wiring installation, and training were prepared and advertised; and that four (4) bids were received on July 21, as follows:

COMPANY	BID AMOUNT
Lodestar Labs, LLC, Atlanta GA	\$ 19,182.43
Swagit, Dallas TX	\$ 24,740.00
WH Platts Co., Norcross GA	\$ 26,974.00
Columbus Tape & Video, Columbus GA	\$ 28,772.97

Mr. Dowling said that County staff had evaluated the bids and recommend that Columbus Tape & Video, the most responsive bidder, be awarded the bid for a total of \$28,772.97; that while this company is not the low bidder, it did meet all the RFP specifications and recently installed video equipent in the Courthouse; that the bidder will ensure standardization and continuity with the existing equipment; and that the cost will be eligible for reimbursement by the Federal CARES Act grant. Following discussion, the motion to award to Columbus Tape & Video in the amount of \$28,772.97 was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Grant, and passed unanimously.

H. **Project Updates.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, reviewed various projects, as follows:

- (1) Replacement Telephone System. Interviews are scheduled for August 11 with Board consideration scheduled for September 1.
- (2) Servers for IT. Project has been completed.
- (3) Live Stream Equipment for Commission Chambers. This was approved this evening.
- (4) Ambulances. This was approved this evening.
- (5) Courthouse ERU Replacement. This was approved this evening.
- (6) Removal & Disposal of Underground Fuel Storage Tank. This was approved this evening.
- (7) Repair to Three County Bridges. This project is on bid, bids are due September 10, with consideration by the Board on September 15.
- (8) Repair to Barnes Mill Road Bridge. Proposal was approved this evening.
- (9) Melody Lakes Dam. Bid specifications are being prepared, and project completion is expected early 2021.
- (10) Rails to Trails Project. Project to continue to Country Store, a distance of 1.5 miles, should be bid out soon and completed during September 2021.
- (11) Renovation of Old Library. Board approved use of building by Mercer Medicine this evening, with lease agreement and MOU to be drafted for Board consideration.
- (12) Update of Land Use and Development Codes. Focus group meeting took place in mid to late July.
- (13) Compensation Study by CVIOG. The Board heard presentation from CVIOG during its planning retreat on July 30. Consideration by the Board is scheduled for August 18.
- (14) CARES Act Allocation. County has been allocated \$1.6 million to be spent by December 31, 2020; agreement signed July 29 and the County received 30% (about \$480,000) to be used by September 1; great care must be taken in accounting of the funding and use of same.
- (15) SPLOST Collection. Budgeted \$2.5 million and received over \$2.9 million, or 17% over budget.
- (16) LOST Collection. Budgeted \$1.825 million and received over \$2.136 million, or 17% over budget.

- (17) T-SPLOST Collection. Came in over \$98,000 in July and the total for the year will end up exceeding the \$960,000 budget.
 - (18) Airport Sign. Has been ordered, delivery and installation expected in six to eight weeks.
 - (19) Flagpole at Airport. Flagpole is to be delivered tomorrow, August 5, with installation expected soon.
7. **ADJOURNMENT**. There being no further business, the motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Lange, and passed unanimously.

Becky Langston, Chairman

Attest:

Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk