

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION**

February 16, 2021

7:00 P.M.

Commissioners Present: Andrew Zuerner, Becky Langston, Susan Andrews, Rob Grant, Bobby Irions.
Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk. Staff Present by
Phone: Russell Britt, County Attorney.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chairman Zuerner called the Regular Session to order.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** Chairman Zuerner led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **MINUTES.** The motion to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2021, Regular Session was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Irions, and passed with four in favor (Andrews, Irions, Langston, Zuerner), no opposition, and one abstention (Grant, who was absent February 2).
4. **APPEARANCE OF CITIZENS**
 - A. **Harry Lange: Presentation of Library Fund Donations.** Harry Lange, former Commissioner, appeared before the Board to present donations totaling \$75,000 to go toward the Library fund, which will leave a balance of approximately \$71,452, and that he will continue to work on obtaining such donations until the Library balance is zero. The Board thanked Mr. Lange for the donations and for his continued work and dedication on this project.
5. **OLD BUSINESS**
 - A. **Second Reading of Resolution: Public Improvements Authority Language Revision.** Russell Britt, County Attorney, said that this resolution had been discussed during the February 2 meeting and Commissioner Langston had requested a second reading/postponement to this meeting; that the Board, during their January planning retreat, discussed issuing long term debt to acquire funds, currently available at very low rates, to construct and renovate several county facilities and for other purposes; that the funds could be borrowed through the County's Public Improvements Authority (PIA), but the enabling legislation creating the PIA was narrowly written and needs to be amended to allow the PIA to borrow funds for general government purposes; that the resolution, if approved, will be sent to the County's local legislative delegation to present to the General Assembly to approve during their current legislative session; and that after the PIA language is amended, the Board can finalize the projects to construct and renovate. Discussion included that repayment of the borrowed funds could be repaid either from the General Fund or from a future SPLOST, which must be approved by referendum. Following discussion, the motion to approve the Resolution to amend the enabling legislation of the PIA was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Irions, and passed with four in favor (Andrews, Irions, Grant, Zuerner) and one opposed (Langston).
6. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. **Impact Fee Study Proposal.** Chairman Zuerner said that Wood PLC had submitted a proposal to perform an impact fee study, as a result of the January planning retreat, regarding parks and recreation needs and public safety needs (fire, EMS, Sheriff's Office, Jail and 911); that the proposal would take about a year to complete and cost \$91,500; that the expense could be reimbursed by impact fee collections; that a budget amendment (#8) in the amount of \$45,000 would be required for this fiscal year with the balance included in next year's budget; and that if approved, the first order of business will be to make appointments to an Impact Fee Advisory Committee, in accordance with OCGA 36-71-5, and could be made during the March 2 meeting. The motion to approve the Impact Fee Study proposal was made by Commissioner Irions and seconded by Commissioner Andrews. There was discussion about the possibility of including water as part of the study with the conclusion that if the Board wanted to include water as part of the study, it should be done at this point and not added at a later point. Discussion also included that such a study must be done in order to implement impact fees; that the County has been discussing impact fees off and on for about 30 years and by doing the study, it would provide the necessary information to make a decision to either move forward

with the fees or not; that schools, according to State law, cannot benefit from impact fees; and that should impact fees be implemented, the cost of the study can be reimbursed to the General Fund from those fees. The motion to approve the Impact Fee Study and the necessary budget amendment (#8) in the amount of \$45,000 for this fiscal year, passed unanimously. (Document can be found in “Contracts & Agreements” file as C&A #21-01.)

Regarding the advisory committee, which is required by state law, appointments are to be made during the March 2 meeting and shall be comprised of not less than five nor more than 10 members and at least 50% shall be representatives from the development, building, or real estate industries, but that an existing planning commission or other existing committee that meets these requirements could serve as the impact fee advisory committee.

7. **COUNTY MANAGER**

A. **Project Updates.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that the update report now includes a color-coded chart to show what projects are in progress, have been completed, not started, or at risk. He then reviewed various projects, as follows:

- (1) Replacement Consoles (4) for 911. Equipment has been ordered and delivered with installation expected in March.
- (2) LMIG Road Resurfacing. Bids are due February 23, with Board consideration on March 2, and project completion by June 30, 2021.
- (3) Restriping of County Roads. Bids are due February 23, with Board consideration on March 2, and project completion by June 30, 2021.
- (4) Patching of County Roads. Bids are due February 23, with Board consideration on March 2, and project completion by June 30, 2021.
- (5) Melody Lakes Dam. Project is under construction with completion by June 30, 2021.
- (6) Ellerslie Park. Alexander Paving is on-site working on the internal roads, drainage, and the turn lanes from Georgia 85. Commissioner Grant suggested that the “grand opening” of the park be scheduled for a more certain time in case there are delays with repairs.
- (7) Rails to Trails Project. Design is complete; bidding will take place in March with Board consideration in April and project completion expected in late October or November, and that rather than steps, there will be many switchbacks in order to access the Country Store from the trail.
- (8) Replacement Garbage Trucks. Vehicles are expected to arrive in March.
- (9) Scrap Tire Amnesty Events. Events will be held on Saturday, March 13 and March 20, from 8 AM to 4 PM, at the County’s Transfer Station.
- (10) Water Works Administration Building. Project is on going; proposal from architect to prepare construction drawings will be before the Board during the March 2 meeting.
- (11) Renovation of Old Library. Southern A&E has begun the drawings and design, and that during the March 2 meeting, the Board will consider the acceptance of a small state grant in the amount of \$39,000 to pay for the architectural fees for the project.
- (12) Land Use and Development Codes Update. Almost all articles have been prepared, with three or four more expected this week; the draft product should be ready this month; with public input and public hearings to follow with a final product completed in May.
- (13) SPLOST. Record high in December at \$373,147.
- (14) LOST. Record high in December at \$272,026.
- (15) T-SPLOST. Collected \$117,356 in December.

- (16) Single Family Building Permits. Total of 125 permits issued thus far this fiscal year.
- (17) Ditch Witch for Water Works. In response to a question from Commissioner Grant, Mr. Dowling said the equipment may no longer be needed.
- (18) ERU at Courthouse. In response to a question from Commissioner Grant, Mr. Dowling said that the ERU, recently installed at the Courthouse, is functioning properly but we are awaiting the operating manuals for same before payment will be made.

8. **OTHER**

- A. **Courthouse Renovation Costs**. A proposal will be before the Board on March 2 regarding an assessment of the costs related to the renovation of the Courthouse; that the Courthouse is on the National Register of Historic Places and renovations will have to abide by the rules and regulations regarding such designation; that the assessment would take 30-45 days and include a systematic approach regarding renovations in priority order.
 - B. **Whitesville Street Property**. Discussion took place regarding the 10 acres of property located on Whitesville Street in West Point and the fact that no bids had been received for the minimum bid of \$25,000. Following discussion, the motion to rebid the property with a minimum bid of \$10,000 was made by Commissioner Grant, seconded by Commissioner Irions, and passed unanimously.
 - C. **Changing Regular Session Meeting Time**. In response to a question from Commissioner Grant regarding changing the meeting time of the Board's regular session, Russell Britt, County Attorney, said that following his review this topic should be on the next agenda.
9. **REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION**. Chairman Zuerner said he would like an Executive Session to real estate disposition.
 10. **RECESS FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION**. The motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing real estate disposition was made at 7:50 PM by Chairman Zuerner, seconded by Commissioner Grant, and passed unanimously.
 11. **RESUME REGULAR SESSION**. The motion to go back into Regular Session was made at 8:10 PM by Chairman Zuerner, seconded by Commissioner Grant, and passed unanimously.
 12. **ADJOURNMENT**. There being no further business, the motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Grant, seconded by Chairman Zuerner, and passed unanimously.

Andrew Zuerner, Chairman

Attest:

Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk