

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BUDGET WORK SESSION IV**

May 30, 2018
5:00 PM

Board Members Present: Becky Langston, Susan Andrews, Rob Grant, Andrew Zuerner. Board Member Absent: Harry Lange. Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk.

Others Present: Alex Santiago (IT), Brian Williams (Community Development), Wayne Morris (Tax Assessor), Bit Geter (Animal Control), Ronnie Duke (Solid Waste), Stephen Waskey (Community Center & Recreation)

CALL TO ORDER. Chairman Langston called the meeting to order and said the purpose was for the continued discussion of the proposed budget for FY 19/20. She noted there were some Department Heads present and asked if any wished to make comments on their budgets.

911 (Department 13). Monty Davis, 911 Director, appeared before the Board and reiterated the need to have the servers and UPS back ups in the amount of \$173,000 put back into the budget.

District Attorney (Department 26). Julia Slater, District Attorney, appeared before the Board to request that the increase in salary and benefits (\$19,611) for an Assistant DA be put back into the budget and explained that an ADA in her Columbus office starts at approximately \$20,000 more than the same position in Harris County. She also said that after five (5) years in the Columbus Office, an ADA is bumped up to \$73,000.

Animal Control (Department 21). Anna Donaldson, Animal Control Officer, appeared before the Board to request that the professional services for vet costs (\$2,000) be put back into the budget due to the increase in the number of dogs and cats being received, adopted out, or spayed/neutered, which is required to be performed before adoption takes place.

Departmental Review. Discussion results of department by department review were:

- ▶ Jail (Department 11). No changes.
- ▶ Magistrate Court (Department 23). No changes.
- ▶ Non-Departmental (Department 35). Delete Valley Partnership membership dues (\$5,000).
- ▶ Prison (Department 15). No changes.
- ▶ Probate Court (Department 09). Add back new full-time Deputy Court Clerk (\$42,788 - salary & benefits).
- ▶ Public Works (Department 16). Add back the two portable buildings (\$12,500).
- ▶ Recreation (Department 32). Stephen Waskey, Recreation Director, responding to questions from the Board, explained the general building repairs (\$4,000) was for the parks; that the contract labor expenses (\$65,000) is to pay umpires and officials for rec programs; that the soccer parking improvement (\$30,000) is to improve with gravel and to concrete the handicapped parking areas for better access. Commissioner Grant said that the High School will be replacing soccer goals and there is a possibility that the old ones can be donated to the County.
- ▶ Sheriff's Office (Department 10). No changes.
- ▶ Superior Court (Department 22). No changes.
- ▶ Tax Assessor (Department 05). Add back the aerial flight (\$22,000, which is a partial payment)
- ▶ Tax Commissioner (Department 03). No changes.
- ▶ Vehicle Maintenance (Department 17). No changes.
- ▶ Volunteer Fire Departments (Department 36). No changes, but discussion included the possibility of the County constructing a fire department in the Northwest Harris Business Park for West Point to staff and provide equipment for the purpose of serving not only the business park but the surrounding area (approx. 5 mile radius), and the possibility of a fire tax to generate revenue for the VFDs.
- ▶ Library (Outside Agency Department 27). Stephanie Green, librarian, appeared before the Board and said the proposed funding is sufficient for the library needs; that the library will no longer be open on Sundays but the hours for Saturday will be extended by two hours; and that during operating hours, there is no charge for the use of meeting rooms, but there is a charge for use after hours.

Remaining Budget Accounts. Randy Dowling, County Manager, then reviewed the remaining budget accounts.

- ▶ Special Revenue Funds
 - Confiscated Assets fund (Department 52). No changes.
 - County Jail fund (Department 61). No changes.
 - County Law Library fund (Department 38). No changes

- Drug Abuse Treatment & Education fund (Department 40). No changes
 - Emergency Telephone System/911 (Department 13). Previously discussed. Chairman Langston asked Mr. Dowling to make sure the comprehensive radio coverage test (\$50,000) is not redundant. Discussion included that the coverage test would determine how many towers will be needed, where they need to be located, and have cost estimates for installation.
 - Hotel/Motel Tax fund (Department 80). No changes, but further research is needed regarding the possibility of the County retaining a portion for unrestricted use.
 - Local Victim Assistance Program fund (Department 41). No changes.
- ▶ Capital Project Funds [Public Improvements Authority (Dept. 79), SPLOST 2004 (Dept. 72) is closed, SPLOST 2009 (Dept. 73) is closed, SPLOST 2014 (Dept. 81) is soon to be closed, TSPLOST 2013 (Dept. 96) will expire in 2022, SPLOST 2019 (Dept. 85), Library Construction (Dept. 82) is closed, Economic Development (Dept. 83) is closed, Rails to Trails (Dept. 84)]. Mr. Dowling information regarding the closed accounts has been provided for historical purposes.
- ▶ Debt Service Fund (Department 77). No change; mainly provided more as info than anything else.
- ▶ Enterprise Funds
- Airport Fund (Department 37). No changes. Discussion included there are two employees keeping the Airport open 60 hours a week, with some other relief employees on an as needed basis. Mr. Dowling reiterated the need to increase the starting salary of the Airport Manager position, which is currently being advertised.
 - Solid Waste Fund (Department 19). No changes. It is noted that about \$1,000,000 will be transferred to the General Fund to balance the budget.
 - Water Works Fund (Department 93). No changes. Discussion included that with the new electronic meters the post card billing system will be the same but there will be a change regarding notices; and that the new building, the funds for which were deleted from the proposed budget, could come from reserves, which are not included in the budget.

Other Discussion

- ▶ Generators. Mr. Dowling said that the generator grant application to get to the next level has been approved for Water Works (6), 911 (1), and Jail (1), but not for the Community Center as GEMA does not consider it a critical need during emergencies; that it will be during FY 20/21 before the generators will be obtained; that the cost for a generator for the Community Center, to include installation and all the necessary appurtenances is \$234,000. No consensus.
- ▶ Community Center. Stephen Waskey, Recreation Director, explained, as requested during the May 28 Budget Work Session, the professional services (\$9,000), the advertising expenses, the patio picnic tables, and discussed the 70/30 and 80/20 split with program instructors. Discussion included that the handicap chair at the pool must be replaced in order to meet ADA requirements of having two forms of pool accessibility to the pool, and that the camera system is needed to replace the fuzzy analog cameras for safety and security purposes. Discussion also included the possibility of no longer having memberships at the Community Center but adding a \$25 Recreation Fee to property tax bills to be used for all recreation areas; that the Community Center is the only public building for which one must pay a fee to utilize; that citizens should not be required to pay a fee for use, but would pay a fee for rental of the classrooms and/or gym for private events; that there could possibly be a lot of push-back about adding such a fee to tax bills. No consensus.
- ▶ Ellerslie Park. Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that the budget included \$100,000 for clearing up the collected storm debris, but the low bid, on which the Board will take action on June 4, came in at \$125,000, so another \$25,000 will need to be added. There were no objections.
- ▶ Soccer Lights. Discussion included that the cost would be slightly over \$100,000 per the quote from Georgia Power; that while the effort is appreciated, there are more pressing needs for the County; that it's a good proposal and will benefit the county and should be considered; that it may be possible to get another quote for the installation that is less expensive; that the \$40,000 pay back in the Soccer Association's proposal is only an estimate and they expect to pay more; that there are other expenses that will be incurred - the monthly power bill; that in the past, funds were earmarked for soccer field lights; and that as much information as possible is needed so that the right decision can be made. No consensus. Thomas Vowell, Soccer Association President, was in attendance and took part in the discussion. Mr. Vowell is to contact Diverse Power regarding the installation of the lights.

BUDGET PUBLIC HEARINGS. The Budget Public Hearings will be held during the June 4 and June 18 meetings, with approval and adoption by resolution on June 18.

ADJOURNMENT