

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

May 18, 2021
4:30 PM

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

CALL TO ORDER. Chairman Zuerner called the meeting to order and said that this was the second work session for the FY 21/22 budget. Randy Dowling, County Manager, said several department heads were present to discuss their budgets.

Airport (Dept. 37). Ronnie Pendergrass, Airport Director, appeared before the Board and said, regarding the proposed budget cuts, that he is requesting another full time employee, in addition to his current part time employee, who will only work as needed and not on a regular schedule; that with the proposed increase in hours (from 8 AM to 5 PM to 8 AM to 6 PM) the additional person will be needed in order to have staff on duty seven days a week. There was discussion regarding the proposed unloading on planes onto truck using a forklift and Mr. Pendergrass was requested to make contact with the appropriate people regarding the endeavor to determine their interest and report back to the Board regarding same. There was discussion about adding ramp fees (\$50/day for small jet; \$100/day for large jet, but waived if fuel is purchased) and increasing the small hangar fee from \$165 to \$190 and the large hangar fee from \$215 to \$270, all of which are comparable to surrounding airports.

Prison (Dept. 15). Cynthia Nelson, Warden, appeared before the Board and said that the Prison is in need of a roof replacement in the amount of \$145,000 and that the PREA audit is scheduled for October and has gone up in cost from \$2,700 to \$3,400.

Elections (Dept. 24). Sherrail Jarrett, Elections Supervisor, appeared before the Board and said, regarding the proposed budget cuts, that she is requesting that her part time employee become a full time employee; that elections will start again in March with qualifying; that while voters card files are almost updated, new ones come in every day; that the employee currently works 24 hours a week, but during elections, her hours increase to 40+; that the change from part to full time will be about \$26,931 in salary and benefits; and that old records are being purged (according to state law) in an effort to make more room in the Courthouse elections room in order to get all the voting machines and equipment from the Commissioners' office to that room. There was discussion regarding records storage, which included that Randy Dowling, County Manager, had met with Justin Finney, from the Board of Education, regarding the use of several climate controlled, secured rooms in the Carver Resource Center on Carver Circle, and that he believes there would be ample room for Elections, the Board of Commissioners, and other departments in that facility, and that if security cameras are needed for Elections, such can be installed.

Solid Waste (Dept. 19). Ronnie Duke, Solid Waste Director, appeared before the Board and the small replacement building, which is included in the proposed budget, is necessary because the current building is off its foundation and the wood is rotten. Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that plans are to increase the capacity at the Cataula Convenience Center in an effort to eliminate the overtime that accrues from having to empty the collection containers at that location each weekend.

Vehicle Maintenance (Dept. 17). Bobby Ammons, Vehicle Maintenance Director, appeared before the Board and said that he has no concerns or issues about his proposed budget, but does have issues regarding his salary which resulted from the CVIOG study last year; that he is requesting to go from a grade 21 (at \$61,975) to a grade 23 (at \$71,316), a difference of \$11,299 including benefits; that he has 35 years of professional experience in all aspects of a vehicle shop; that when he was hired it was at a lower salary than he was earning but was promised that consideration would be given to increase his salary after a time, but that didn't happen (due to a change in management); that he has been employed by the County for six years; and that CVIOG did not spend enough time with him to observe his work ethic, find out about his background, etc. Discussion included there are three other directors in the same grade, while other directors are in grade 23; that CVIOG made the recommendations for position classifications, which the Board approved; that another analysis by CVIOG is not needed; and that it is possible that the classifications need to be amended.

Public Works (Dept. 16). Mike Brown, Public Works Director, appeared before the Board and said that he has no issues or concerns regarding the proposed budget for his department. He answered questions regarding the R/W cutting crews, the patching of Hamilton Pleasant Grove Road, Fortson Road Bridge, and Harris Road Bridge.

Water Works (Dept. 93). Jeff Culpepper, Water Works Director, appeared before the Board and said that he has no problems with the County Manager's recommended budget cuts. He answered questions regarding the new radio-read water meters, the approximate cost to fill a pool (\$110.00± for roughly 20,000 gallons at \$5.42/thousand), the Hadley Road project being worked on as time permits, and the newly created Waste Water Department in order to keep costs and expenses separate from Water Works.

Other. Following the appearance of the department heads, Mr. Dowling asked if there were any questions from the Board. Discussion included that the potential grant match (for the Development Authority) is not included in the proposed budget, but would be included in the July 2022 budget; that while broadband expansion is in the SPLOST economic development budget, it is not included elsewhere; that although there have been webinars regarding the American Rescue Plan (ARP), the guidelines for the use of the funds have not been finalized; that the County should be receiving \$3.4 million this year and another \$3.4 million 12 months later with funding required to be used by December 31, 2026; that the State will have grant funding available for broadband for which all cities and counties can apply, but only totals \$30 million, which won't go far; that the cost to implement broadband at Piedmont (subdivision) will cost approximately \$1 million; that a full time employee for Ellerslie Park will definitely be needed once the park is up and running; that Ellerslie Park will be different from the other recreation parks in that it is passive with only trails, playground, fishing, and a lodge as amenities, but the normal day to day maintenance of the Park will be necessary; that before the Park can open, more trees and brush have to be cleared, pavilions constructed, parking spaces established, etc.; and that currently it's all hands on deck to get Ellerslie Park ready as quickly as possible. Following discussion, consensus was to move forward with advertising and interviewing for the Park Maintenance Tech position at Ellerslie Park, with the position to start July 1.

NEXT BUDGET WORK SESSION. Scheduled for 4:30 PM on Tuesday, May 25.

BUDGET PUBLIC HEARINGS. First Public Hearing will be held during the June 1 Regular Session, and the second will be held during the June 15 Regular Session, with adoption by resolution to follow.

ADJOURNMENT