

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PLANNING SESSION**

December 12, 2017

9:00 AM

Conference Room, Harris County Public Library
138 North College Street, Hamilton, GA

Commissioners Present: Harry Lange, Susan Andrews, Martha Chewning, Becky Langston, Jim Woods.
Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; Nancy McMichael, County Clerk; John Taylor, County Attorney; John Magazu, Recreation Director.

Call to Order. Chairman Lange called the meeting to order at 9 AM.

Valley Partnership. Discussion included the assistance the County has received in the past from the Valley Partnership (VP); that within the last three years the VP hasn't brought anything to the County; and that Chairman Lange will contact VP officials, advise that the County is unhappy with the lack of assistance it has been getting from VP, and to arrange for Brian Anderson and Brian Siletto to attend a Work Session to discuss what the VP offers, does, and will do for the County.

Broadband. Discussion included there are issues with accessible internet for the Hamilton Business Park, but that an arrangement with Charter is in the works, if we can get commitments from TNT and Hart Steel that they will sign up with Charter once they locate in the business park; that a letter is to be drafted to send to State and US representatives regarding the need for broadband in Harris County; and that Mr. Dowling should contact Colin Martin, President & CEO of the Harris County Chamber of Commerce, regarding the drafting of the letter, which will ultimately be printed on County letterhead and signed by Chairman Lange, Mr. Martin (for the Chamber of Commerce), Craig Greenhaw (Chairman of the Development Authority), and if so desired, the School Superintendent.

Succession Plan for Airport. Discussion included that a back-up plan is needed for Airport Manager in the event Bill Champion, Airport Manager, is unable to perform his duties; and that funds should be included in the upcoming budget for a regular part-time position to work with Mr. Champion. It was suggested that Mark Oropeza, who works part-time Courthouse Security and was formerly associated with the Columbus Airport, be contacted to determine whether he would be interested in serving as interim manager if the need were to arise.

Rails to Trails Status. Discussion included that Randy Dowling, County Manager, is to contact Bill Doyle (Callaway Gardens) and Jim Trott (Pine Mountain) as to whether or not they are in favor of allowing golf carts on the trail. Chairman Lange reported that GDOT may be of assistance regarding the bridge over US 27, but he is not sure as to the particular assistance at this time.

Community Center Fees: Tennis Court & Community Center Usage for Private Classes. Discussion took place and ended with consensus to move forward as set out in the fee schedule; that regarding the business license for the instructors, a license is required, but the fee for same will be waived; and that the instructors must be certified. Action to be taken on the Community Center Fee Schedule during the December 19 meeting.

Scholarship Fund. Regarding the Rec Board setting up a scholarship fund in John Magazu's honor to help offset recreation program costs to young people unable to participate due to financial hardships, discussion included that getting 501(c)(3) status, managing the funds, etc., would be the responsibility of the Rec Board, and that all charges in establishing this fund, including attorney fees even if to John Taylor, County Attorney, are to be paid by the Rec Board.

SPLOST 2019. Regarding page 5 of the SPLOST 2019 package, discussion included combining the Centralized Records Storage Facility with the Renovations to the Courthouse and Old Library but to split the allocated \$350,000 with \$100,000 going to the Renovation Line, which will bring that total to \$1,750,000, and \$250,000 going to the Public Safety line, which will bring that total to \$3,730,000. Regarding the use of the Old Library, consensus was to move the Commissioners' office to that location, move Community Development to the current Commissioners' office location, and to utilize the current Community Development office as a Centralized Records Storage Facility. It was suggested that Faith Birkhead be contacted about assistance in drafting a plan for the Old Library building. Regarding the allotment by year, it was suggested for 2019-20 to move Courthouse Renovations to 2023-24; for 2020-21 to move Courthouse Renovations to 2024-25; for 2021-22 and 2022-23 to move Public Works Facility; for 2023-24 to move Broadband to 2020-21; and for 2024-25 to move Broadband to 2021-22. There were no objections to the suggested changes. Mr. Dowling is to draft a bullet-point

document to help in SPLOST discussions with the public and to particularly stress that the Community Center Debt Relief is included in the SPLOST so that the payment will not be part of property taxes.

Radio System Status. Mr. Dowling reported that the drafting of the agreement between the County, Dean Ginn and Diverse Power is underway; that the document may be finished by late January for Dean Ginn and Diverse Power to review; and that while the County is currently paying Dean Ginn \$25,000 annually for radio maintenance, there is a need to have an agreement with Mr. Ginn setting out details regarding same. Discussion also included that a plan is needed regarding the County's future radio system.

Library Funding. Discussion included that should the County have to use General Funds to pay for library construction costs, it may be difficult to convince citizens to vote in favor of the upcoming SPLOST.

Water Meter Project. Mr. Dowling confirmed that the Board was aware of the water meter replacement project through a GEFA loan.

Recreation Director. Mr. Dowling reported that of the individuals he has interviewed he would like to offer the position to an individual who is a Recreation Director in another County at a rate higher than the 5% above the minimum starting salary, which is \$43,305.60. This request is to be on the December 19 agenda for action.

ADJOURNMENT.