

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PLANNING SESSION**

May 4, 2018

9:00 AM

Conference Room, Harris County Commissioners' Office
104 N. College Street, Hamilton, GA

Commissioners Present: Harry Lange, Susan Andrews, Martha Chewning, Jim Woods, and Becky Langston (at 9:45 AM). Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; Nancy McMichael, County Clerk. Also in attendance Clint Chastain, CFO, and (around 11 AM to 11:45 AM) Jeff Friedman & Matt Conn (Friedman, Dazzio, Zulanis & Bowling, PC).

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

Hotel/Motel Tax Increase Consideration. Consensus was to move forward with increasing the Hotel/Motel Tax from 3% to 5%; for the appropriate document to be drafted as soon as possible; and for the increase to be effective January 1, 2019.

Commissioners' Emails and County Cell Phones. Commissioner Andrews said that she would prefer to have a County email, rather than use her personal email, for County business. Following discussion, with the exception of Commissioner Andrews, the other Commissioners indicated they did not want such a email address. A County email address will be set up for Commissioner Andrews.

Comprehensive Plan Working Committee. Following discussion of the makeup of the Comp Plan Committee, consensus was for the Commissioners to advise the County Clerk of the names of the citizens they wish to appoint, for Mrs. McMichael to send emails to the Development Authority, the Planning Commission, and the School Board regarding the need for no more than two individuals from each entity to be part of the Committee, and for Mrs. McMichael to send emails to the mayors regarding their participation.

Sign Ordinance Status. Chairman Lange reported that John Taylor, County Attorney, has provided the draft sign ordinance to another individual who has more expertise regarding the sign ordinance.

County Logo. Chairman Lange reported that the County logo has been registered.

Budget FY 18/19 Review. Randy Dowling, County Manager, reviewed the draft Budget for FY 18/19. Discussion included change the phrasing of the second paragraph on page 9; that the Fund Balance is projected to show a slight uptick; that the earnings on savings has increased from \$90/month with Wells Fargo in November 2016 to \$1,600/month in November 2017 and to over \$13,000/month with Georgia Fund 1 in April; and that there are three or four more CDs, which upon maturing, will be invested with Georgia Fund 1. The budget discussion was suspended to hear a presentation regarding participation in an opioid lawsuit.

Opioid Lawsuit Interest. Jeff Friedman and Matt Conn, of Friedman, Dazzio, Zulanis & Bowling, PC, of Birmingham, AL, appeared before the BOC regarding participation in the opioid lawsuit, to include that if there is no award, there would be no cost to the County; that in order for the County to be able to get a share of any award, it must be part of the lawsuit; that their fee would be a percentage of any recovery awarded, with the standard usually 30%; and that if the BOC wants to be part of the lawsuit, a resolution, vote and agreement will be necessary. No consensus was made other than there needs to be conversations with the Sheriff, court system, and possibly others as to how this issue is affecting the County.

Budget FY 18/19 Review Continued. Discussion continued and included that revenues are down from 17/18; expenses are down from 17/18; that 60% of the General Fund is salary and benefits; that regarding the two small buildings the Animal Control requested, but for which funding has been removed, that Tim Cockrell, teacher of the High School Construction Class, be contacted about having the class construct the buildings; that there is a need to know the percentage of ambulance charges that are paid; that while membership in the Valley Partnership is still debatable, status reports are expected to be on a regular basis; that the Sheriff's Office can have five, not six, vehicles; that the Airport is the 39th largest airport in the State; and that the BOC would like a map of the county water lines.

Jail Food Service Agreement. The BOC was advised of the need to ratify an agreement between the Sheriff and a food service provider for food service at the Jail. The Sheriff is to be at the May 15 meeting to discuss the agreement.

Personnel Policy Update. In response to a questions regarding the status of the Personnel Policy update, Mrs. McMichael said that it is still being worked on, but that a copy of the suggested changes could be provided if desired.

ADJOURNMENT