

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING AND LEGISLATIVE DINNER**

August 9, 2022

4:30 p.m.

Harris County Library Meeting Room, 7511 GA Highway 116, Hamilton

Commissioners Present: Andrew Zuerner, Rob Grant (arrived at 6:07 p.m.), Becky Langston, Bobby Irions, Susan Andrews. Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; Russell Britt, County Attorney; Andrea Dzioba, County Clerk; Brian Williams, Community Development Director; Lee Walton, Consultant; Kris Summerall, Payroll and Benefit Technician.

CALL TO ORDER. Chairman Zuerner called the meeting to order.

Proposal to Have the County Provide Health Care Upon Early Retirement. County Manager Randy Dowling explained the proposal and advised that there would not be a change in plan and the this would be offered as an option and that is could incentivize early retirement for those that are eligible and would like this as an option. He further explained that there are employees that would like to retire but stay for healthcare benefits. This proposal could provide a bridge for eligible employees that would like to retire but would need a bridge from age 60 to age 65. Additionally, this proposal may provide a significant cost savings to the County. He informed the Board that there are currently 15 employees eligible now and there would be an additional 14 eligible employees if the age was placed at 55. Paul Bates, Client Manager at ACCG, will be providing actuarial information for review soon. The proposal will be brought back to the Board at a later date after the actuarial figures are received.

Use of Installment #2 of Federal ARP Funds. County Manager Randy Dowling advised the Board that the County received installment #2 of Federal ARP funds totaling \$3,422,000; that this amount has been included in the FY 2022-2023 budget; and that the funds need to be obligated by December 31, 2024 and expended by December 31 2026. Discussion included a desire to consider utilizing funds for design and construction of an elevated water tank near SR 315 and I-185 (\$2,600,000), the extension of Hadley Road water lines (\$350,000), partially construct the new EMS/VFD facility in the NWHBP (\$472,000), and for broadband and potentially partnering with developers to expand broadband availability. The consensus was to utilize funds for the Hadley Road water lines, assist with the construction of the new EMS/VFD facility, and leave the remainder of the funds available for now.

IT Full-Time Position. Discussion included that Meriwether County had pulled out of the shared IT Help Desk position; that if a full-time position was implemented in January that it would have no impact on the budget; and that IT is already behind schedule. The consensus was to hire the IT Help Desk position in January as presented.

Update - Primary Elections - Sherrail Jarrett. Commissioner Andrews informed the Board that she had requested that Sherrail Jarrett provide the Board with a general overview of how the elections went since Ms. Jarrett does report to the Board directly. Sherrail Jarrett, Chief Registrar, provided an update to the Board and advised that the Primary went well. She stated that there were some minor issues; that there were some phone issues but they were fixed; that their offices are working out well and are very nice; that the Secretary of State is in the process of building their databases for November; and that early voting will start in October.

Public Works Facility Concept Plan. Randy Dowling, County Manager, presented information to the Board related to the Public Works Facility Concept Plan and the timeline related to finalization of the overall design, bid process, construction, and expected completion around August 2023. The Commissioners expressed a desire to have the facility built in a location other than the Hamilton Business Park. Mr. Dowling informed the Board that there was no known alternate location.

Commissioner Langston stated that the next item was an important discussion and that Vice-Chairman Grant should be included. Chairman Zuerner stated at 5:47 p.m. that there would be a recess until 6:10 p.m. Vice-Chairman Grant arrived at 6:07 p.m. Chairman Zuerner called the meeting back to order at 6:10 p.m.

Action Item - General Discussion Regarding Unified Development Code. Chairman Zuerner opened the item for discussion. Discussion included an inquiry about why this was being discussed again; that the intention was not to stop the process; that no one received complete information; that the process would include two more public hearings with possible work sessions; and that citizens would be able to air fears. County Attorney Russell Britt advised that the UDC can be brought up, restarted, and that items in disagreement should be worked through prior to public hearings. The motion to bring back the Unified Development Code to the table and to go through the process was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Irions and passed with three in favor (Andrews, Irions, Zuerner) and two opposed (Grant, Langston).

Legislative Dinner. Dinner and discussion was held with the local legislative delegation (Richard Smith, Vance Smith, Debbie Buckner, and Randy Robertson). Discussion included Coroner's State Law Proposal and increasing the Hotel/Motel Tax from 5% to 8% through Local Legislation during the 2023 General Assembly.

ADJOURNMENT.