

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR SESSION**

October 3, 2023  
6:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Rob Grant, Susan Andrews, Greg Gantt, Scott Lightsey, Bobby Irions. Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; Russell Britt, County Attorney; Clint Chastain, Chief Financial Officer; Brian Williams, Community Development Director; Phil Eberly, Airport Consultant with Lead Edge Design Group; Andrea Dzioba, County Clerk.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** Chairman Grant called the Regular Session to order at 6:30 p.m.
2. **INVOCATION / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** Vice-Chair Andrews gave the invocation. Chairman Grant led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **MINUTES** The motion to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2023 Regular Session was made by Vice-Chair Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Lightsey, and passed unanimously.
4. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. **Financial Statements - June, July, and August 2023.** Clint Chastain, Chief Finance Officer, was available to answer any questions. Commissioner Gantt inquired about the Non-Departmental Expenses (100-035) in the August 2023 Financial Statement being at 81% already. Mr. Chastain advised that Non-Departmental has items in it that are “front-loaded” at the beginning of the year with one of those items being property and casualty insurance. He went on to state that IT is also the same way as there are maintenance contracts that are paid at the beginning of the year.

The motion to approve the Financial Statements for June, July, and August 2023 was made by Commissioner Gantt, seconded by Vice-Chair Andrews, and passed unanimously.

- B. **Approval of the Airport CIP Five-Year Plan.** Chairman Grant introduced the item and stated that every year, the county’s airport along with all other airports in Georgia must prepare and submit a five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to the Georgia Department of Transportation to remain eligible for funding. Phil Eberly, Airport Consultant with Lead Edge Design Group, said that the plan must be submitted to Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) on an annual basis, by November 10th this year to remain eligible for funding; that it includes proposed Airport projects for the next five years (Fiscal Years 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, and 2029); and that the plan can be changed at any time should the Board desire to make changes. Mr. Eberly reviewed the projects included in the Five-Year CIP - hangar site preparation in year 1; land acquisition and obstruction removal in year 2; runway and terminal apron overlay in year 2; new hangar area site preparation and paving in year 4; and parallel taxiway overlay in year 5. Mr. Eberly informed the Board that they were under no obligation to spend the funds. The motion to approve the Five-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) was made by Chairman Grant, seconded by Commissioner Lightsey, and passed unanimously.

- C. **Appointments to the Board of Zoning Adjustments (BZA).** Chairman Grant said that the terms of Dewey Batchelor (District 3) and Arnold Jackson (District 1) expired on September 30, 2023 and that they both wish to continue to serve on the Board of Zoning Adjustments and have requested reappointment.

The motion to reappoint Dewey Batchelor and Arnold Jackson to serve on the Board of Zoning Adjustments for a term from October 1, 2023 until September 30, 2026 was made by Commissioner Gantt, seconded by Vice-Chair Andrews, and passed unanimously.

- D. **Appointments to the Water Assistance Committee.** Chairman Grant said that the terms of John Britt and Roger Smith have expired and that they both wish to continue to service on the Water Assistance Committee and have requested reappointment.

The motion to reappoint John Britt (until May 31, 2026) and Roger Smith (until May 31, 2025) to serve on the Water Assistance Committee was made by Vice-Chair Andrews, seconded by Chairman Grant, and passed unanimously.

- E. **Appointment to the Board of Family and Children Services.** Chairman Grant said that the term of Debbie Blackmar has expired, and Janice Harris has resigned from the Board of Family and Children Services and that Debbie Blackmar wishes to continue to service on the Board of Family and Children Services and has requested reappointment. Chairman Grant advised that Commissioner Greg Gantt has recommended that Kathy Carlisle be considered to service for the unexpired term held by Janice Harris.

The motion to reappoint Debbie Blackmar to serve until June 30, 2028 and Kathy Carlisle to serve until June 30, 2027 on the Board of Family and Children Services was made by Commissioner Irions, seconded by Commissioner Gantt, and passed unanimously.

- F. **Appointment to the New Horizons Community Service Board (NHCSB).** Chairman Grant said that Kittye Jo Crockett served on the New Horizons Community Service Board and previously advised that she did not want to be reappointed. Chairman Grant stated that Andrea B. Winston, Executive Director, of New Horizons Behavioral Health has requested that the Board of Commissioners appoint Ms. Terry Edwards to serve on the Board of Directors as our Harris County representative.

The motion to appoint Terry Edwards to serve on the New Horizons Community Service Board (NHCSB) until June 30, 2026 was made by Commissioner Gantt, seconded by Vice-Chair Andrews, and passed unanimously.

## 5. **COUNTY MANAGER**

- A. **FY 2022-2023 Budget Amendment #7 Final for Audit Clean-up.** County Manager Randy Dowling introduced the agenda item and advised that Clint Chastain, Chief Financial Officer, was in attendance to respond to any questions. Discussion included that most of the amendments are because there was more revenue than projected - like the hotel-motel tax.

The motion to approve FY 2022-2023 Budget Amendment #7 for Audit Clean-up was made by Chairman Grant, seconded by Commissioner Lightsey, and passed unanimously.

- B. **Project Updates.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, advised that this is the first Program of Work for this fiscal year and reviewed various projects as follows:

- (1) **SPLOST Continuation.** The state required initial meeting was held with the cities on September 21, 2023 and the next meeting is scheduled for October 4, 2023 at the Library. The election for a SPLOST continuation referendum is to be held during March 2024.
- (2) **Update to Comprehensive Master Plan.** This project is on-going.
- (3) **New GIS System.** This project has been active for several months and various map layers will be created and coordinated with RVRC.
- (4) **New Citizen Request Management System.** SeeClickFix went live yesterday and will have limited rollout during early October.
- (5) **Re-Stripe Numerous County Roads.** This project has almost reached completion.
- (6) **Observation Tower at Ellerslie Park.** The footings are being constructed and completion is expected during early 2024.
- (7) **Develop Pine Mountain Valley Park.** The deed has been filed and ownership has been completed.
- (8) **New Fire Training Facility.** This is still under construction, the project is ongoing and completion is expected during late October of 2023.
- (9) **Five-Year Water and Wastewater Master Plan.** This project is ongoing.
- (10) **Water and Wastewater Rate Study.** This project is ongoing.

- (11) Design of New Elevate Water Tank. This project is being designed and sited. Design should be complete in December, bid out in early 2024, construction beginning in mid-2024, and completion in early 2025.

Commissioner Irions requested an update on the soccer field and the installation of equipment. County Manager Randy Dowling advised that it should be completed quickly and may be done in a couple of weeks.

6. **PUBLIC HEARINGS AT 7:00 P.M.**

- A. **Application of Harris County Board of Commissioners to Amend the Text of the Unified Development Code, Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 11 and 12.** Chairman Grant read the information related to the Application to Amend the Text of the Unified Development Code, Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 11 and 12 and advised that approximately 85% of the changes being requested are due to House Bill 1405 related to State Zoning Procedures Law.

Chairman Grant asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of this application. There being none, Chairman Grant asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition to this application.

Morgan Marlowe, citizen who lives at 6521 GA Hwy 18 in Pine Mountain, appeared before the Board and said that he has asked for agritourism to be done since 2018 and made recommendations; that there shouldn't be restrictions with a master plan; that a 5-acre minimum is ridiculous; that there is harm to farms; that no one should care how many farm dinners that are held; that businesses in Harris County compete with people all over; that people need to be incentivized; that the restrictions should be loosened; and that if rental cabins and u-pick were allowed that lots of organizations would be interested.

Discussion included why three acres instead of two acres for immediate family members; that the master plan should be looked at and corrected if needed; that it was thought that the master plan didn't have restrictions; that it was believed that farm dinners had been changed to one per month; and that if text is changed that the Board could incorporate a fee if desired.

There being no further questions from the Board nor comments from those in attendance, either in favor of or opposed to this application, Chairman Grant closed the Public Hearing at 7:21 p.m.

The Board did not take any action on the Application to Amend the Text of the Unified Development Code, Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, and 12 pending further review of the concerns discussed.

7. **COUNTY ATTORNEY.**

- A. **Granting a Right-of-Way Easement to Diverse Power for the EMS/VFD Station in the Northwest Harris Business Park.** County Attorney Russell Britt provided information related to the granting of a right-of-way easement to Diverse Power for the EMS/VFD Station in the Northwest Harris Business Park. He further said that to avoid any delays in obtaining permanent power for this project, that the County Manager has already executed the easement and submitted it to Diverse Power and that only ratification is needed.

The motion to ratify the previously executed right-of-way easement between the County and Diverse Power for permanent power installation at the new EMS/VFD station located in the Northwest Harris Business Park was made by Chairman Grant, seconded by Vice-Chair Lightsey, and passed unanimously.

- B. **Granting an Easement to the City of Hamilton Over, Under, Through and/or Across the Man O'War Trail in Hamilton.** County Attorney Russell Britt provided information related to the proposed granting of an easement to the City of Hamilton and advised that it was decided that all future maintenance of the installed underground drainage pipe was best left to the city and not a private property owner.

The motion to grant an easement to the City of Hamilton over, under, through, and/or across the Man O'War Trail in Hamilton was made by Chairman Grant, seconded by Commissioner Irions, and passed unanimously.

- C. **REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION.** County Attorney Russell Britt requested an Executive Session for the purpose of discussion of litigation, real estate, and personnel.
8. **RECESS FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Commissioner Irions made the motion to go into Executive Session for litigation, real estate, and personnel at 7:30 p.m. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Andrews and Commissioner Gantt, and passed unanimously.
9. **RESUME REGULAR SESSION.** The motion to go back into Regular Session was made at 7:52 p.m. by Commissioner Irions, seconded by Commissioner Gantt, and passed unanimously.
10. **ADJOURNMENT.** There being no further business to discuss, the motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Irions, seconded by Commissioner Gantt, and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

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Rob Grant, Chairman

Attest:

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Andrea Dzioba, County Clerk