

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION AND REGULAR SESSION**

November 7, 2023

Commissioners Present: Rob Grant, Susan Andrews, Greg Gantt, Scott Lightsey, Bobby Irions. Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; Russell Britt, County Attorney; Andrea Dzioba, County Clerk.

WORK SESSION

5:30 p.m.

1. **SPLOST 2025.** Chairman Grant called the Work Session to order. County Manager Randy Dowling advised that the process began on September 1, 2023; that the Board reviewed and discussed at a meeting on September 5, 2023; that meetings were held with the cities to obtain their project lists; and that the Board has two proposals: one with a 78%/22% distribution and one with a 84%/16% distribution as requested by Commissioner Gantt. Mr. Dowling said that final decisions on projects and distributions need to be made. Discussion included that economic development should be addressed; that SPLOST can be used for infrastructure and tangible items; that the listed categories may be too broad and need to be more specific; that the Board wants to be more specific so that people know what they are considering; that there are certain parameters for SPLOST projects; that citizens need to be educated on the SPLOST projects that may be proposed; that there is a strain on the fire departments and commercial will add to their load; that as more industry comes into the County, that new trucks for the fire departments will be needed; that there needs to be a balance between industry development and funds used for fire departments; that the money in Recreation may be for the AG Center and that it is economic development; that an AG Center would need to be run by the County in order to bring in revenue; that the percentages need to be decided and provided to the cities; that the call of the election needs to be in the December 7th newspaper and an intergovernmental agreement needs to be agreed to; that the County should stay with the current 84%/16% split; that the cities provided the projects that they wanted to include; that the cities included the radios for their public safety/police departments; that specific roads might need to be included for paving consideration if there are some that the Board expects to pave; that the percentages can be adjusted pro rata across the proposed projects for the cities; that projects could be funded with General Obligation bond debt; and that citizen notification and education is part of the process.

The Work Session recessed at 6:30 p.m. and would be continued after the Regular Session.

REGULAR SESSION

6:30 p.m.

2. **CALL TO ORDER** Chairman Grant called the Regular Session to order at 6:30 p.m.
3. **INVOCATION / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** Vice-Chair Andrews gave the invocation. Chairman Grant led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. **MINUTES** The motion to approve the minutes of the May 30, 2023 Budget Work Session IV, the July 27, 2023 Quarterly Planning Session and Legislative Dinner, and the October 17, 2023 Regular Session was made by Commissioner Irions, seconded by Chairman Grant, and passed unanimously.
5. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. **Reappointments to the Recreation Board.** Chairman Grant introduced the agenda item related to reappointments to the Recreation Board. Chairman Grant advised that Cataula has recommended Shane Morris be appointed is since Wade Pirkle has asked to be replaced on the Recreation Board. The motion to appoint Shane Morris and reappoint Sondra Moss, Lee Starling, and Sonja Williamson to the Recreation Board for the term of January 1, 2024 until December 31, 2026 was made by Chairman Grant, seconded by Vice-Chair Andrews, and passed unanimously.
 - B. **Request for Inclusion in the Thriving Communities Regional Pilot Program (TCP-R).** Chairman Grant stated that the River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC) has inquired as to whether Harris County would be interested in being included should RVRC receive grant funding through the Department of Transportation's Thriving Communities Regional Pilot Program

(TCP-R) and that if Harris County is interested in participating that we need to provide an interest letter so that it will be included in the TCP-R grant application. The motion to authorize the Chairman to submit an interest letter to RVRC for the TCP-R grant application was made by Vice-Chair Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Lightsey, and passed unanimously.

- C. **Insolvent List of the Tax Commissioner.** Chairman Grant advised that Tax Commissioner Wanda Bates has provided the Insolvent List which is taxable personal property that her office states is uncollectible in the total amount of \$13,866.22. Chairman Grant stated that he has spoken to the Tax Commissioner and the County Attorney and that he would like to table this item until the November 21, 2023 Regular meeting to have some questions addressed.

6. **COUNTY MANAGER**

- A. **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) **Employee Compensation and Classification Plan.** CVIOG will begin project in January 2024 and that is right around the corner.
- (2) **SPLOST Continuation.** This has been discussed several times previously and as recently as this evening. Discussion will continue after the Regular meeting.
- (3) **Replacement of Community Center Dehumidification System.** All of the parts are in and it should be installed on November 18, 2023 and the closure should only be hours instead of days.
- (4) **New EMS/VFD Facility.** This project is almost finished and there should be an open house later in December.
- (5) **New Public Works Facility.** This project is on bid and the bid opening is on December 1st and Board consideration on December 5th. Chairman Grant wanted to make sure that they were clear as a Board that the building would be named after Mike Brown, previous Public Works Director. County Manager Randy Dowling stated that it would be named the Mike Brown Public Works Department.
- (6) **Wi-Fi at Moultrie and Pate Parks.** Wi-Fi is completed at the soccer fields at Moultrie Park and Pate Park is still in the process. Commissioner Irions stated that there has been a lot of positive feedback and siblings waiting at the park are using it to do their homework on their Chromebooks.
- (7) **New Fire Training Facility.** This project is almost complete and may be complete this week. This facility will be the Planning Session location on November 28, 2023 along with the ribbon cutting. Invitations will go out this week for the ribbon cutting.

7. **COUNTY ATTORNEY.**

- A. **REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION.** County Attorney Russell Britt requested an Executive Session for the purpose of discussion of litigation.

8. **RECESS FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Chairman Grant made the motion to go into Executive Session for litigation at 6:44 p.m. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Andrews and passed unanimously.
9. **RESUME REGULAR SESSION.** The motion to go back into Regular Session was made at 7:26 p.m. by Vice-Chair Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Lightsey, and passed unanimously.
10. **ADJOURNMENT OF REGULAR SESSION.** There being no further regular business to discuss, the motion to adjourn the Regular Session and go back into the Work Session was made by Vice-Chair Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Irions, and passed unanimously. The Regular Session adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

The Board of Commissioners reconvened the Work Session at 7:27 p.m.

WORK SESSION

1. **SPLOST 2025 CONTINUED.**

Additional discussion included that an AG Complex or Radio System may require debt. The consensus was for the percentages between the County and the cities be 84% for the County and 16% for the cities; that for Recreation that language be added to state “including but not limited to an AG Complex and pickle ball courts;” and that language be added to borrow funds through General Obligation bonds.

The Work Session adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Rob Grant, Chairman

Attest:

Andrea Dzioba, County Clerk